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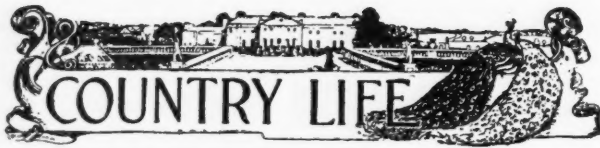
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THE VISCOUNTESS CHURCHILL AND CHILDREN.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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ON THE EAST COAST

WE are very much afraid that the feature which the opening of the year 1905 is most likely to be remembered by is its distress. There is scarcely a town of any importance in the United Kingdom where the question has not arisen in a pressing form, while in London, which is, in a sense, a congeries of towns, distress has many centres, and is engaging the closest thought and attention on the part of the benevolent. If we direct our eyes, then, to a comparatively small class it is not because of any want of sympathy with the great crowds who are feeling the pinch of cold and hunger in the towns. But the distress on the East Coast is different from that in other districts of England. It raises problems of another sort altogether. No one can say that the sufferers have been neglected. Letters have been written in the newspapers, meetings called, subscription lists opened, and other measures taken to meet their wants; but while other sections of society are injured by the ebb of prosperity, and may fairly be expected to benefit on its flow, we are afraid that there is little hope to hold out to the fishermen. Their vocation is to ply the hook and line, and, like Falstaff, they find their vocation gone. The reason of this is scarcely open to dispute, although complications arise even here, for on the face of the matter one would expect the fishermen to be better off than ever before. At any rate, the food that they harvest from the meadows of the sea is dearer in price than ever previously, and in much greater demand. Who doubts that, may well compare the present with the not distant past. Even moderately young people may remember when the poor ate fish because it was cheap: but now even the commonest kinds form an expensive

item on the menu of clubs and restaurants. One would think this would be better for the fishermen, but it is not so for those who stick rigidly to the older forms of capture. They are in many cases actually starving. For years past, in many parts of the East Coast, the mainstay of the fishermen has been the crab, and crabbing has yielded a livelihood when other things failed. Here and there, it is true, may lie an oyster-bed, here and there a place where lobsters are caught; but the great stand-by has been the crab, and in many districts crabbing has failed.

It is notorious that the white fish have fallen off tremendously within the three-mile limit. There is scarcely a place in the old fisheries where a boat can go out and get a catch comparable to those which used to be common. We need not stay to argue as to whether this is due to trawlers or not; or, rather, it may be frankly admitted that the mechanical trawler is by far the more effective means of killing fish, and that to set up the old line and net against it is pretty much the same as if one were endeavouring to carry on a great factory by handwork and discard steam machinery. Those who oppose it are, in the words of the apostle Paul, kicking against the pricks. Effective and labour-saving machinery is the characteristic that distinguishes the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from those that have gone before, and it would be mischievous to encourage a small and poverty-stricken section of our working people to stand up in opposition to the time in which they live. We are well aware that a finer class of men does not exist in the British Islands. They have most of them been born so close to the edge of the sea that even in their beds they have been accustomed to hear the roaring of the storm in winter and the crooning of the waves in summer. Their vocation has taught them to take their lives in their hands and face death at any hour of the day in search for the poor livelihood that the waters afford. They have lived in small communities by themselves, and are not smothered with the petty meannesses born of haggling on the market-places. Their kindness to one another, as well as to the stranger, is proverbial. If it had been possible to retain them as part of the British population, it would have been almost a crime on the part of anyone to do anything that would lead to their elimination; but they have been left, like some of their own boats, dry on the shore while the wave of progress has moved on, and we really do not see that anything can be gained by nourishing and encouraging the animosity to trawlers.

This recommendation will not fall vainly on the ears of those who have come into practical contact with the fishermen of recent years. It is pitiful to notice with what gratitude they who used to be so independent will accept help as to the most ordinary necessities of life. We know of several decent and hard-working men who from no fault of their own, are obliged to sit idle all day long because there is nothing to tempt the boats to go out. There is sickness among the women and hunger among the children, and benevolence could take no better form than that of educating the coming generation into a more effective means of earning its livelihood. Of course, the political economist finds that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. He will tell you that, despite the economy in labour effected by machinery, there are actually more people engaged in catching fish to-day than there were fifty years ago, and that the average earnings of the individual, and therefore the average comfort of the families, has been very greatly improved. Nor are his facts assailable. They can be proved to the hilt by the statistician. But an average, even when correct, is the most deceiving thing in life. It includes both the extremes and the means. We doubt, in fact, if ever there was such a thing as an average man who lived an average length of life, wore an average suit of clothes, and earned an average amount of money. In this case you have the average made up of, on the one hand, the starving line fishermen, and, on the other, of the flourishing trawler. The process required is that of levelling up, and we are afraid that the survival of the fittest means the extinction of the line fishermen. What it all comes to, then, can be put in very simple terms. It is a hard thing to teach an old dog new tricks, and to ask those sea-worn veterans to find some other means of earning a livelihood would merely be to demand the impossible. All that we can do is to see that they undergo no unnecessary privation, and that their lives indeed are made as easy and tranquil as they deserve to be; but it is otherwise with the boys and girls who are coming on. Indeed, we regret to know that many of the youths and maidens of the fishing villages have already been driven into towns. Our duty to them is to see that they adjust themselves to the new conditions and do not cling helplessly to the obsolete.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Viscountess Churchill with her children. Lady Churchill was the daughter of the third Earl of Lonsdale, and was married to Viscount Churchill in 1887.



DURING the last few days very full descriptions have appeared of the scenes enacted before Port Arthur, scenes of that mingled description which only war can produce. General Nogi has been successful, and England, naturally, rejoices in the victory of her ally. But, on the other hand, no one, and least of all the bravest, can behold without emotion the humiliation of men who have acquitted themselves so well as this heroic garrison. They were forced to make their fortifications in a great hurry at the outbreak of war, and yet they maintained them with a tenacity and an ability that would have proved too much for any assailants less gallant and determined than the Japanese. The most notable feature of the surrender is the humanity with which it has been conducted. War has often been called a great teacher, and those who remember the frightful scenes that were enacted at Port Arthur when the Chinese lost it, will be glad to admit the advance in morals and manners evinced by the conduct alike of besiegers and besieged on this occasion.

After a great deal of preliminary negotiation, which might or might not have been necessary, the North Sea Commission has at last got to work. Its composition leaves no ground for cavil on the part of Great Britain. Men of the highest rank from all the important countries of the world are assembled at Paris, and it is scarcely possible that they should fail to give a true verdict. At the same time, the position of England was stated by Mr. Balfour quite clearly directly after the incident, and it has changed in no way whatever. We do not by any means admit that there is room for doubt as to the facts; but a foreign Power was entitled to hold an impartial enquiry before censuring its own officers. According to several of our contemporaries, there seems to be little doubt that the Russian Marconigrams intercepted in Great Britain showed that the original impression of the responsible officers was that they had fired on ships belonging to their own fleet. After the exhaustive enquiries made by the Board of Trade, this seems the one inevitable conclusion, and we cannot see how the International Commission can possibly fail to arrive at it.

It is a sign of the gradual healing of wounds a generation old that the question of giving Alsace and Lorraine equal representation in the German Federal Council is being actively discussed in many German circles. The step is a natural sequel to the abolition of the Dictatorship in those provinces, but it does not follow that it will be taken just yet. It would naturally be more satisfactory to German sentiment if it were found possible to efface altogether the mark of inequality rendered politically necessary when the provinces were added to the Empire; but the actual decision rests not with the German people or Parliament, but with the Government, which in this case, at any rate, means the Kaiser. As the two provinces, moreover, were constituted as "Imperial Territory," under the Kaiser's sovereignty, it is feared in some quarters of the Empire that to add representatives of Alsace-Lorraine to the Council would merely be to put more power into the hands of Prussia, a step which would be regarded with little satisfaction. The equalisation of the inhabitants of these provinces with the rest of the people of Germany is likely to prove a rather delicate process.

Mr. Charles Booth has certainly hit on an original idea for the promotion of Imperial principles. He has arranged to send first to Canada, then to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, Mr. Holman-Hunt's fine reproduction of his picture "The Light of the World." This he proposes to exhibit in the various colonial towns free when the authorities will give him a room, and when he has to hire one, at such a charge only as will be sufficient to meet the expenses. It is a very patriotic idea, and speaks eloquently of the enthusiasm of the man who has worked out so many social statistics for the benefit of his countrymen.

The propagation of Imperial ideas by the dissemination of art principles is something new in history, and it will be extremely interesting to await and watch for the practical result.

A curious alarm has been raised in France over a matter that seems really deserving of attention. This is the fact that, in the event of an outbreak of war, the whole of the cable arrangements of France are in the possession of England; so that, for instance, if a conflict had arisen over the Fashoda incident, France might at once have been cut off from all communication with her colonial possessions. It is a grievance of about four years' standing; but during that time only about 270 miles of cable have been laid between Oran and Tangier, and 925 miles between Turan, on the coast of French Indo-China, and Amoy. Many other projects have been mooted, but these represent all the practical work that has been done.

A stormy and wild career is ended with the death of Louise Michel, to whose memory it would be too great a compliment to liken her to the Maid of Orleans. Yet if woman ever had her fill of life, it was surely she. Born in a respectable stratum of society, brought into early communion with that strange and meteoric genius Victor Hugo, she might with a different turn of the dice-box of fate have become almost anything; but during the wild days of the siege, in 1871, she organised a band of Amazons, who, in their reckless career, committed outrages that procured for them exile to New Caledonia. Thence she returned in 1880, but the ancient riotous spirit had not left her, and very soon after that she got into trouble again for leading a riot in the Latin Quarter. Once more she found herself in prison, but on emerging resumed her Anarchist teaching. In the more lucid intervals of her life she wrote certain books that left their impress on her contemporaries, among them the notorious "Microbes of Society," and the plays "Nadine" and "Le Coq Rouge." It was a life of storm, but has ended as all lives do.

THE SANCTUARY.

The trees that spread a rustling sea above a shady wood,
Cried out to me, "Come hither, friend, and join our brotherhood!"
Like priests of solitude they seemed, and ministers of grace,
Who locked the mystery of peace within that quiet place.
The sanctuary open'd for me, as tho' an unseen hand
Had drawn aside a mystic veil that hid a promised land.
I took the covering from my head, and from my feet I shook
The dust of earth, and silently the restless world forsook.
As the shadows softly gathered me, a bird began its song,
A tranquil little melody that bore my heart along.
And every tree that I passed by was rustling like a rill,
That runs in sweet simplicity adown a shining hill.
And every tree that sheltered me of that low whispered band,
Was happy company for me, and seemed to understand.
And silently the darkness fled, as, borne upon the wind,
The clouds disperse at sunset, leaving starry skies behind.
I know not how they ministered, those children of the wood,
For they only rustled softly as in sylvan dreams they stood.

WELLESLEY SHATWELL.

It is a curious fact that, while the emigration from Great Britain to the United States is very much larger in its numbers than the emigration from Great Britain into Canada, the migration from the United States into Canada is very much more considerable than any migration in the opposite direction. Indeed, such migration as there is in the last direction is so small as to be almost inconsiderable. On the other hand, so many American citizens are moving into the province of Manitoba and others in the North-West, that a certain disquietude and a little covert jealousy on the subject are expressed by some American critics. Apart from the interest of the movement it has some practical importance for us as members of the Empire, for it forces upon us the question as to the effect that this influx from the States will produce on the political views of the Dominion. A Canadian Premier has assured us that the American immigrants approve so highly of Canadian institutions that in a few years they assimilate Canadian political views; and in this assurance, coming from so high a source, we may find much comfort.

In the New World the season of 1904 appears to have been as notable for apples as it was in England, and the crop is stated to have been the heaviest for eight years past. From the United States and Canada together the enormous amount of nearly 11,000,000 bushels of apples were exported to England during the year, and although there was, during the greater part of 1904, an unusual demand for foreign apples, owing to the total failure of our previous autumn's crop, the reflection is inevitable that, with better methods of bringing to the home consumer such an enormous supply as we had in the autumn just past, we should be able to put a great deal of money into the

pockets of home growers which at present goes overseas. There is still no apple reaching this country from any part of the world which for real excellence of flavour equals half-a-dozen standard English varieties; but the American grower knows how to attract the purchaser by uniformity of size and quality, in a way which home growers have hardly begun to learn. And so in the big towns the English product hardly finds one purchaser at twopence a pound where the American fruit finds ten at double the price.

Searchers for hidden treasure seem to have no luck. Not long ago an attempt was made to salve gold—stolen gold—which was known to have been lost in the wreck of a vessel that was taking it away from a small harbour on the East African Coast. The attempt nearly cost much human life, and nothing was achieved. An adventure on a great scale has just formed part of the amusements of a trip which Lord Fitzwilliam took in the *Veronique*, formerly the *Harlech Castle*, to one of the islands in the South Pacific. Telegrams report an accident, though it is to be hoped not a serious one. Considering the remoteness of the time when the old buccaneers and pirates did bury treasure, and the number of persons to whom any information obtainable must have been open, the chance of finding any left is very small. Another consideration seems, as a rule, to have escaped the treasure-seekers. The metal buried was nearly always silver. Silver in ingots is now worth very little in comparison with its ancient value, and even if found would be no great prize.

It seems fairly certain that the Post Office mean to acquire the property of the National Telephone Company. Whether the public will gain or lose remains to be seen. But the present state of undevelopment of what is potentially one of the great conveniences of the age is a disgrace to England. The want of system, the time lost, the inconvenience of the stuffy little "boxes" are maddening. We ought to have a telephone-wire to every village which at present has a telegraph installation. It would be almost certain to pay. At present, if a telegraph-wire is extended to the remotest country place, it is the exception for it not to pay its way in two years. But the use of the telephone is a far greater convenience than is the telegram. Neither can it be said that country people are slow to appreciate it. A telephone was connected with a lighthouse off the South-west Coast. The lighthouse-keeper used to get a friend to read him the main contents of the daily paper into the telephone receiver, to his great content, for these messages gave him so much to think about that he declared that the time spent on the rock seemed only half as long as before.

If fly-fishers would keep a record of winter temperatures, and also one of the appearance of flies and insects during the dark months, they would be quite surprised at the number of winged creatures or their larvæ which appear in winter. In the water there is a never-ending series of insect life, only most of the creatures do not become perfect and emerge till early or late spring. But the mere presence of insect food in the water keeps the fish on the move. We have known a fine trout hooked with a fly—though, of course, put back again—on Christmas Day, when it was seen rising steadily. But grayling are in season, and almost at their best, as late as the end of January. Supposing an angler to live on good grayling water, he has only to take out his rod when he goes for a morning walk, and it is probable that he will see fish moving, and that he may get good sport, in nearly every week of the winter quarter. Grayling-fishing with the small red worm and the float is deadly on a bright, frosty morning. But the method does not commend itself where the fly will answer.

A contemporary publishes a correspondence on the price of the skins of birds the feathers of which are suitable for dressing artificial flies. It is mentioned that the price of a kingfisher's skin is 2s., and of a jay's wings 6d. a pair. Probably a kingfisher's skin is quite worth the money, for the bird is protected in many counties. No one need want for jays' feathers, and cheap ones. They can be got from any keeper, and some hundreds have to be shot annually in Epping Forest alone. Almost any skins can be bought fairly cheaply at the retail naturalists' shops, as skins not perfect enough for stuffing or as specimens can be sold for making flies. One of the few dear skins is that of the dotterel. It is a very rare bird now in England, and apparently not common anywhere. But trout-flies, as a rule, need no rare skins of birds or beasts. The skin of one mole and one water-rat for dubbing, wings of the water-hen, woodcock, snipe, partridge, and starling, a little silk, and a deft pair of fingers will make flies enough to catch trout on "wet-fly" streams for most of the year. For salmon-flies matters are different. Golden pheasant and jungle-fowl skins are rather expensive.

An interesting suggestion is conveyed by the experiments that have been conducted for some years at Haggerston Castle in Northumberland in crossing the American bison with different breeds of British cattle. Two of the half-breeds were sent into Newcastle lately, to the butcher, but proved so obstreperous in transit that his professional services were not required, one of the poor beasts breaking its neck in its terrified struggles, and the other being shot in the train-box lest it should do itself a like damage. The interest of the suggestion, however, that the Haggerston experiments give us consists in the hint that we have, perhaps, not yet reached finality and the best possible quality in our domestic animals. The small amount of enterprise in this direction that exists in the country was sufficiently shown lately by the indifference with which the offer for sale of the Chartley herd of white cattle was regarded. The beef of the cross-bred bison and domestic cattle is said to be of a finer flavour than that of the pure-bred ox. Many more experiments of a like kind might be made with very probable advantage.

Lord Pembroke has come to the rescue of the ancient carpet industry at Wilton, the chief mill having got into difficulties which threatened to put 200 people out of employment. The quality of these carpets matches that of the finest products of the East. Fifty years is a moderate estimate of the life of one of them, and they are all made of "fast" colours and all in one piece. One of the Earl's ancestors intervened in the same way 150 years ago. It is interesting to note how permanent and how good are the first-class local products of this country. The Witney blankets, for example, are the best in the world, though made in a remote little town in north Oxfordshire. Nor must it be forgotten that in our day more than one local industry has been started which seems likely to last as an example of first-rate work. Witness, for example, the weaving in the Ruskin School at the Lakes and at Haslemere, and the transplanting of the art of making the best lace to new counties, where it flourishes exceedingly.

WINTER SUNSET.

See, out of purple twilight, how the trees
Press o'er the downs, in troops, to heaven's rim,
Dipping dark forms, and antlered brows, where seas
Of soundless glory wash, and over brim.

Tranced they stand, like monstrous stags at bay,
Upon the brink of mystery looking in;
There the bright sun leaped from the coasts of day,
There great winds sleep, and hidden storms begin.

What more may lie beyond? What burning world
Rolls earthward with diurnal cataclysm
On this gold tide's gold lips? The hills have heard,
And bare their labouring heads for holy chrism;

The bats' long ears are pointed forth to hearken;
And all the hollow vales and lonely places
Into black caverns of hearing darken,
Lest they should miss the secret of the spaces.

Lo! in the East an early star or two
Will, tense with listening, from its lattice lean,
All silver pulses—yea, the sky's dim blue
Palpitates flushing through its vast serene.

What can this message be whose potent balm
Bids our poor planet, travelling in pain,
Rise with each dawning, new-create, and calm,
To move in beauty round its pole again?

Man alone knows not. Man, the sovereign lord
Hears not like bats and caves, sees less than trees,
Deaf to the moment's sacramental word,
And visionless o'er burning mysteries.

ELINOR M. SWEETMAN.

In spite of special efforts at suppression, and the natural effects of agricultural development, a heavy toll of human life is still claimed annually by the wild animals and snakes of India. According to the Government figures the total number of deaths caused by wild animals during 1903 was 2,749, an increase of more than 200 over the total of the preceding year. Man-eating tigers and wolves are responsible for the largest number of these deaths, while leopards, bears, and hyænas also make away with a considerable number of lives every year. Large sums are paid by Government for their destruction, and the removal of one or two habitual man-eaters will frequently almost free a district from danger for a few years; but their places are almost invariably filled before many seasons pass. Deaths from snake-bite are returned at the enormous total of 21,827. But it is the belief of many of those who know India best, that snake-bite is assigned as the cause of a large annual number of deaths occurring from other causes which it is not so expedient to notify publicly to the authorities.

IN WINTER WEATHER.

It was a winter's day in January, towards the end of the nineteenth century. A grey sky laden with snow hung low over a half-whitened country, where the trees glistened with hoar frost, as though they had been made for a pantomime. It was one of those dull, still days when the only sound to be heard was the creaking of the river ice as boats passed merrily up and down, double and single, and in groups, some staggering as though beginners, others whirling and making figures as if skates were their only footwear. They added a vivid and pleasing suggestion of humanity to a



W. Rawlings. *THE DESERTED FOREST.* Copyright

landscape that otherwise was very dreary. So at least thought a maiden who, with timid yet eager feet, walked from one solitary cottage to another in the sparsely-peopled hamlet, carrying in her hand a bag, out of which she was presenting gifts to the poor and needy, and carrying in her heart a something that left more than alms behind. For the best of her gifts was a sunshine that irradiated not only her own gentle face, but the faces of all with whom she came in contact. As she got further away from the great house, whence she had emerged, some of the older peasants shook their heads warningly, and hinted in a respectful way that it would be better for her to



G. Curtis. *CLOTHED IN WINTER GARMENTS.* Copyright

return. On the confines of the estate lay a great common, that in its day had witnessed many a foul scene; but it was not the tradition of the highwaymen who used to stop the coaches there, since the oldest peasants could scarcely remember the time when they ran, nor was it any fear of the gipsies and other gangrel folk who used to find a harbourage on the common. To them the stern policeman literally and in a metaphor had long said "move on"; the grandfathers and grandmothers of the present generation might have felt terrors such as these with good reason, but the remotest part of England has now become in a sense so orderly that terrors of the road have ceased to have actuality. The truth of the matter was that lying close adjacent to

the common were a few of the old squatter freehold cottages that once in many districts were more numerous than they are now. The dwellers therein, in the emphatic language of the old ploughmen, "feared neither God nor Devil" and there certainly was not a cottage girl with any reputation to lose who would be seen near them in the dusk. But the young lady from the hall, though one could not help noticing a certain timidity akin to bashfulness in her countenance, nevertheless had that utter fearlessness which accompanies a pure and innocent mind, and her intent evidently



W. A. J. Hensler.

WINTER ON THE MARSHES.

Copyright

was to dispense some, at least, of her bounty in those ill-reputed hovels. At least, that was the conclusion drawn by a young man who, from a neighbouring coppice, eyed her movements. We have said "young," but those who met him would have found difficulty in guessing his age, for sun and wind had made his face mahogany, and, like others in that district, his only regard in the matter of dressing was to protect himself against the cold. His neck was wrapped in a thick and not over-clean muffler. The outer garment over his body was a kind of sleeved moleskin waistcoat, and he had improvised knickerbockers by shoving the ends of his trousers between his legs and his stockings, thus displaying a pair of heavy wooden brogues. Above his grim rough face a cloth cap was set, and in his hand he carried a gun, while a number of mallards and other wildfowl slung over his shoulder told what his quest had been. Altogether he did

land that fell vacant, and strove with might and main to extinguish the ancient common rights and get the land enclosed. In return they hated him and all his people and all his belongings, with the intensity which class prejudices engender when interests such as these are brought into conflict.

It was no superficial thought that made the ancients say that innocence is holy. The first appearance of the girl in these quarters evoked expressions of contempt and dislike, for, like country folk generally, they had peered out at her from the cottage windows long before she was aware of their presence. When, however, they saw the look in her brown eyes and heard the fearless tones of her true and kind voice, it was impossible for the surliest of them not to look just a little less gloomy as she went away.

The last house of all stood quite at the other side of the common, and was a small red-tiled building with a tiny cabbage

garden in front of it, and a little garth around. The approach to it was by a foot-road among the gorse, and it was here that the young man and the maiden came face to face. She said "Good evening," and he replied, in the born yokel's most churlish style, "You have your share of it." But his rudeness did not even seem to surprise her, and she passed on without making any remark. Even when he followed and came up to her side her step neither slowed nor hurried, though she did not again speak till he asked, in more offensive tones than before, where she was going. "To your cottage to see your father," she answered, with a frank and direct glance, which caused her head to turn round a little. In doing so she noticed, or thought she noticed, some dark forms as of cattle crouching among the gorse, but paid little attention to the fact at the time.

"Feyther wants nowt o' ye," he ejaculated, in his most boorish North Country dialect. "Nowther your broth nor your brass. Take them to the poor beggars who feed on your slops and skim milk. We can fill our own pots here," and he shook the bunch of wildfowl in her face. "Your feyther would drive my feyther from what was his since he was born, and sooner than eat bite or sup belonging to you, I would feed on neeps like a sheep."

The girl looked at him again, more surprised perhaps to find in him a genuine anger and indignation than to encounter such brutal rudeness, of which she had previously had experience, since in all the outlying parts of the country were exceptional individuals who thought they obtained some revenge for the unpopularity of the father by insulting the girl.

"I do not know anything of your quarrels," she said gently, yet without a tremor of fear; "but I hope you will not mind my calling to see how old Silas is, and I will not give him anything you do not want me to." Her meekness, however, met with no kindred response.

"It is time to cut your stick," said the man, and when they came up to the cottage he placed himself in front of the door, with the evident intention of not allowing her to enter. If he anticipated that she would make any appeal to him, he was wrong. She simply said "Good-night then," and turned

to retrace her steps homeward. He gazed at her retreating figure for a minute or so, and then entered the cottage, flung down his gun and game, and said, with a rough jest to an old man lying on the bed, "Here, feyther, here's stuff for broth, and I've just turned away squire's lass that was coming to make a charity of you."

Under the blankets somewhere oaths began to rumble, and among them was a very opprobrious epithet applied to the young lady, whereupon the son, probably to his own great astonishment, said, "Na! na! Stop that, dad. She meant no mischief, nowther."

"Have ye got owt i' the bottle?" asked Silas. "If ye have, bring it here, ye damned milksop; and, if ye would not have me rise in my bed and thrash ye yet, say no word about that spawn of hell at the big house."



H. Wanless.

WINTER SUNSHINE.

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not look a pleasant person for one to meet on a winter night, and on closer observation it would be found that every muscle of his body was tense and firm, and that, though apparently slight in build, he really must have possessed immense strength. He followed the motions of the girl with a grim sort of half-smile just parting his lips, and almost unconsciously he began to strike across the fields, so that at a distant turn of the road, if she went to the furthest house, he must meet her. The girl, unconscious of being watched, tripped on her way, a little more quickly, perhaps, than before, but always carrying the same happy smile wherever she went. Those who knew the feeling of the people would have been surprised at the reception they gave her, for the lord of the manor, to whose household she belonged, was engaged in a perpetual struggle with the lawless outcasts who lived just across the boundary of his estate. He bought any cottage or

"Well, they do not deserve it," said the youth, with all his first sullenness, as he helped his father to the bottle. But, no sooner was that done, than instinctively he began to move towards the door. In spite of all his rags and his ignorance, he was a man, every inch of him; and the fair face that he had looked so closely at for a moment was one of those visions that, from the beginning of the world, have drawn lord and serf alike through bog and mire in never-ending search. He only came to the door to let his eye follow the little figure now wending

its way home by gorse and covert; but, as she had done on coming up, he saw four or five dark forms dodging and following her among the gorse to where the road led through one of the blackest and darkest plantations in the district. He entered the cottage, and pointing his thumb out to the road, said, "They're after her." "And serves her right," said the elder, with an evil chuckle. The young man sat down on the side of the bed for a moment, but he was evidently uneasy, and soon returned again to the door, where he still saw the little figure travelling along the winding road, and the dark forms dodging behind like hounds after their prey. "I will be in it," he said,



O. G. Pike.

WAITING BREAKFAST.

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and, seizing a cudgel, began swiftly to cross the moor, so that he would get to the plantation almost as soon as they did, the savage once more uppermost within him. If the others were like him, it was evident that they meant to take a deadly revenge for what they considered the wrongs done by her father.

But already a knot of village wretches had assembled at the plantation and spread themselves over the road, with their hats pulled over their faces, waiting for the girl to pass. She paid no heed, and perhaps something in her inno-

cence awed them, for, though they stood in the road so that she could scarcely pass, they did not attempt to molest her, and she walked quietly on to the wood. It was but the hesitation of a moment, however. Since her first appearance in the village they had resorted to the public-house and maddened themselves with the poison sold there; so that, though not as yet in the condition of town hooligans, they were prepared for any kind of crime, and one of the boldest in his cowardice suggested cutting across the wood and coming in at the other end, where they would meet her once more. This they proceeded to do with all haste, and as they scarcely made a pretext of concealing their movement, her



H. A. Game.

WREATHS OF SNOW.

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timidity must have been increased to an extraordinary extent, though the high courage that so often comes with good breeding kept her pulse cool and her step even. But meantime the other young man had arrived on the scene, and, cursing the manœuvre of his companions, hurried up to the young girl with the deliberate intention of insulting her. Indeed, he had an arm raised to place round her neck, when she stopped, and womanhood itself, at once pleading and forbidding, commanding and asking, shot through her eyes. He hesitated for a moment, and then his arm fell at his side as though it were withered, she with quiet dignity resuming her way. He followed slowly behind, overmastered in a sense by her dignity, yet, as the event proved, with a new manhood awakened in him. When the gang of roughs came up jostling and jeering and using gross language, evidently intended for the express purpose of reaching the lady's ear, he grasped his stick tighter, quickened his step, and came up to her side, and she, after one startled glance at his face, dropped a finger on his arm. What there was in that touch who shall tell. In the rapidly waning light of evening he was seen stepping along at her side like a big mastiff with his hackles up, and there was something in his air and look that silenced every insulting voice and caused the lady to proceed unharmed on her way. And that was how in winter weather a man and a woman met, not in the flesh only, but in spirit.

THE CALL OF THE STAG IN KASHMIR.

IN Kashmir, as in some other countries, advantage is taken of the instinct which impels a stag to "call" in the rutting season, to compass his death. Here it is the Bara Singh that is so hunted—a grand deer, somewhat larger in every way than his Scottish congener, but otherwise very similar. But in Kashmir he inhabits vast pine forests, which—except in winter, when he can be seen and tracked among the snow to some purpose—necessitates resort to the method of still hunting. For Indian officers do not, as a rule, get leave in winter, and the horns are shed before they can reach the hunting-grounds in spring. The leave season ends on October 15th, and there is just time to put in a few days after Bara Singh in the calling season. Towards the end of September the big stags, in obedience to irresistible impulse, forsake the high, secluded valleys, where in solitary and selfish retirement they have passed the summer months, and make their way down to the lower pine-clad hills. The purpose of their migration is a double one. The higher mountains have become cold and food harder to find, owing to the first snowfalls: a good enough reason, but this is as nothing to the other—the call of duty and of love. For are not the hinds waiting in these pine forests, and if any delay, may not all be bespoken and appropriated before arrival? So all turn up pretty punctual to time, and then begins "the call"—a weird and wailing bellow, in intent expressive at once of masterful invitation and proud defiance—by which the monarch announces his presence. True, to the mere human ear the note has in it more suggestion of melancholy than of these heroic sentiments; but ultimate results—enraptured meeting or desperate battle—show beyond doubt which must be taken as the true translation. The hinds prick their ears and, under the spell of the same all-compelling law, move in the direction of the call. They make no answering sound, and linger to feed as they go; but their going, and his coming, are sure as fate, and the meeting is soon a joyful fact.

But other ears, too, have heard the call. The heart of a hunter in his tent far below has leaped at the sound. This is what he has been waiting for, impatiently yet with good hope, for days, or it may have been weeks. For, to avoid being forestalled by others, it has been necessary to secure his chosen spot in good time. He has been daily tramping the vast forests during this time, looking for tracks, and listening! listening! But, besides hinds, he will have seen nothing, and nightly has trailed back to camp, weary with hope long deferred. So now all is excitement and action; his heart is light once more, and springy his step. But whence came this call? He is doubtful, and consultation shows no unanimity. But inaction is now intolerable, and a start is made in a general direction, eager ears ever on the alert, hoping for confirmation or correction of the first impression. Yet not another sound may be heard on this whole day, nor perhaps on the next. Then again it will come, from quite another part of the forest, and a fresh start must be made. But surely there can be no mistake this time: the stag must certainly be on that spur—a couple of miles away, but still there. And we make for the spot, energy and confidence renewed. Still, if the stag remains silent, to find him, we know, will be hopeless. On and on we go: we reach the marked spur; but never another sound, and no tracks. Then suddenly another roar, not from this spur, but the next. A much louder sound this time, showing diminished distance. So the excitement grows, the caution and tension redoubled. Soon we are on the

next spur, and nearing the very spot. No slip of the foot now, move not a stone, and let no twig be broken.

Peering through the tree trunks and into every glade and opening of the dark forest, halting often to listen and watch, cautiously, and guarding each footfall, still onward we go. Then once more a mighty bellow, this time, indeed, close at hand. We hardly dare to breathe: our hearts beat and thump, and the wary tread is fearfully imperilled by uncontrollable tremor. We know that the mighty one is actually within range, yet nothing can we see. Was that a branch that moved? Yet why? for there is no breeze. Intently looking, we suddenly define, not a branch, but part of an antler. As yet nothing more; so we dare not fire, and dare not move. With rifle levelled, excitement now at fever pitch, we crouch as still as stock or stone, striving to calm our pulses for the shot. After an eternity the antler moves, there is a sound of pawing the ground, he moves a step forward, and we see him sniff the air, uncertain. A fair mark now, and ye powers! what horns! The bullet speeds true, there is a mighty crash, and the proud head lies low.

True, it is not to be gainsaid that this class of sports is inferior to fair stalking in the open, whether it be ibex or markhor in the high mountains, or red deer in the Scottish highlands. Yet to me there was always a peculiar fascination also in the silent wandering through the forest, the electric thrill at sound of the call, the ever-present sense of the possibility of the game being close at hand, though unseen, the prolonged strain of the faculties during the last half-hour when we know that this must be the case, and the sudden identification in the end. Of all which, one direful effect on the imagination may be read below:

STILL HUNTING.

All is still in the forest as the hunters wend their way,
Pausing oft, with ear and eye alert and keen,
And speaking never a word.

But hark! did ye not hear it?
The cry of a stag from yon far-off hill!
Is it his angry challenge to any who'd dare to stay him,
Or a fond love-note, calling his last year's mate?

Hark! again the sound comes clearer,
Borne on the evening breeze.
Nearer now through the forest stillness
He comes. Then, kind heaven befriending,
I swear he comes to his death.

With stealthy tread, careful and slow
Whence the sound last came we wend,
Listening intent, and with eager gaze
Trying to pierce the dark wood's shade.

Not a sound—when sudden and close at hand
A bellow that stops our breathing.
Then through the gloom a shadowy form,
With antlers spreading wondrous wide, appears.

Still as the forest trees he stands, with muzzle raised,
Sniffing the air: then impatient
Paws the ground, and rends the dead silence
With one more mournful roar—a long farewell to life.

For scarce the sound has died away when quick is heard
A loud report, a hundred echoes rousing,
The bullet's angry whiz through air
And deathly thud in living flesh,
A mighty crash, the hunter's cry of joy,
And all again is still.

P. R. BAIRNSFATHER.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

OF the minor contemporary poets of to-day it might be said, without drawing any invidious comparisons, that William Watson has a style that most resembles that of a great writer, and we are glad to welcome the edition of his poems in two volumes, *The Poems of William Watson* (Lane), which has just been published, with an introduction by Mr. J. A. Spender. In this he makes a kind of apology for including in the collection Mr. Watson's political poems. We ourselves imagine, without hazarding any opinion on their merits, that these verses would have been better left out. Mr. Spender compares them to the speeches delivered by Mr. John Bright during the Crimean War, but the analogy does not hold. Mr. Bright was a professional politician, and the speeches were delivered in the ordinary course of discussion, the object of making them not being to contribute to the literature of England, but to advocate those principles with which the name of the speaker has become associated. With Mr. Watson the exact contrary is the case. He is by profession a poet, and his interference with politics a departure from his usual beat. Moreover if we apply to these compositions the ordinary canons of criticism it will be found that they do not come out of the ordeal scatheless. Mr. William Watson is not at his best when inveighing against Governments. He is, or at least we think so, in those fine lamentations which have been evoked by the gravestones of

other poets. For example, one of the earliest poems of the book is the one on Burns containing these lines:

"He came when poets had forgot
How rich and strange the human lot;
How warm the tints of Life; how hot
Are Love and Hate;
And what makes truth divine and what
Makes Manhood great.
A ghostly troop, in pale amaze
They melted 'neath that living gaze,
His in whose spirit's gusty blaze
We seem to hear
The crackling of their phantom bays
Sapless and sere!
For, 'mid an age of dust and dearth,
Once more had bloomed immortal worth.
There, in the strong, splenetic North,
The Spring began.
A mighty mother had brought forth
A mighty man."

It is curious to notice in all his poetical appreciations how much we find of the poet himself. Mr. Watson at heart takes his mission to be that of an interpreter or preacher, and so to each of the gifts and graces of Burns he adds a use much in the same way as in old-fashioned school-books they described the uses of a cow. She gave milk while she was living, when dead her flesh was eaten as beef, her skin turned into boots and shoes, and

In other words his mission, if he had one, was to sing the "loves, the ways of simple swains," and the mirth and the anger, the keen satire, the passion and the frenzy, were all but incidental to this purpose. Even in regard to Burns we notice that Mr. Watson has not got a very strong appreciation of the humorous, and in the very fine poem "Wordsworth's Grave" it would have been out of place. Nor did he need this sense to teach him to write the elegy on Matthew Arnold:

"And nigh to where his bones abide,
The Thames with its unruffled tide
Seems like his genius typified,—
Its strength, its grace,
Its lucid gleam, its sober pride,
Its tranquil pace."

In the purely Nature poems Mr. Watson is not quite so good as in his elegiacs, though these contain some very fine lines. The following, however, is a little song in his best manner:

"Well he slumbers, greatly slain,
Who in splendid battle dies;
Deep his sleep in midmost main
Pillowed upon pearl who lies.
Ease, of all good gifts the best,
War and wave at last decree,
Love alone denying rest,
Crueller than sword or sea."

It would not be easy in the course of a few lines to give a fair



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A THREATENING EVE AT SEA.

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cups were formed from her horns, and so on. If it be permissible to compare small things with great, this is the method of Mr. Watson. For him the ire of Burns is "shattering," his mirth "withering," and so on through all the graces. But it seems to us more probable that Robert Burns was purely and simply a man of impulse. He loved fun and he loved mirth, not for any effect they produced, but for their own delightful sakes. His hatred was never that of a preacher who could utilise it to benefit a cause. It was wild and spontaneous, like himself. Even his poetry had no purpose in it except that it satisfied the longings of a "maker." It is true that passages might be taken from Burns contradictory of this. He tells us himself that his early ambition was for Scotland's sake "some useful plan or beuk to make, or sing a sang at least," or in another delightful verse:

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the labourer's weary toil
For humble gains,
And make his cottage scenes beguile
His cares and pains."

and judicial characterisation of Mr. William Watson's verse. Much of it was originally contributed to journals and other ephemeral productions, where it looks and sounds better than in a book. But what we feel after reading over his poems is that here is a man who has not given us quite as much as we had reason to expect. He has the poet's temperament, and in no mean degree the vision and faculty divine. In all those themes which are away from the current political movements of the hour, he writes with a stateliness and dignity of spirit that belong to a man who sees things, as it were, from long distances and, therefore, in something like their true perspective. He has a great understanding and command of the beautiful in Nature, and his verse is rich in long cadences that are almost as fine as the murmur of wind in forest-land, or the fall of breakers on a rocky shore. But the fault is that, though he begins in this fine and masterly manner, nothing ever seems to come to a direct end. The writer in very many instances leaves off just as we expect that, having made his first plunge, he will now swim out into the depths of it. But this is to court disappointment. Little poems written

in a grand manner would be no unfair description of the work of his Muse, and we say this with all the less reluctance, because it is to be trusted that Mr. William Watson has still a long future before him, in which he may give us some poem worthy of his great talents. And in future editions there is, if we may be forgiven for saying so, much that could with advantage be taken out of this volume. As an example, we might instance the epigrams, of which the following is a fair specimen:

"Your Marlowe's page I close, my Shakespeare's ope.
How welcome—after gong and cymbal's din—
The continuity, the long slow slope
And vast curves of the gradual violin!"

As a characterisation of Marlowe this is feeble. We suppose it is too late to commence cutting down now; otherwise a much more valuable book could be made of these poems by a free use of the blue pencil.

SHOOTING AT PARK PLACE.

ALTHOUGH we often see records of the huge bags made on large estates, it is seldom accounts appear of what may be accomplished on properties of more modest dimensions. The shooting we are about to describe



W. A. Rouch TO MR. DARCY TAYLOR. Copyright

is over an estate of hardly 1,000 acres, situated on the hills overlooking the river Thames and some thirty-four miles from London. The subsoil is mostly chalk and the climate dry, the rainfall seldom exceeding 30 in. Upwards of 2,000 pheasants are killed annually, and the best season produced a bag of nearly 7,000 head, close on 1,600 having been killed in one day. On a small property, such as Park Place, it is advisable to kill "cocks only" the first time over, and this course is always adopted. It makes a more sporting day, and teaches the remaining birds to fly better in December. The bag in a good year generally consists of 500 to 600 cocks and 200 to 300 rabbits, etc. Another advantage of this plan is that, as the cocks stray more than the hens, by killing them earlier in the season (about November 20th) we save a considerable leakage. Between the first and second shoots about 200 hens are caught up and placed in an open pen $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres in extent. These birds average about 23 eggs each, or 4,600 by May 25th, when they are liberated. Most seasons a few eggs are purchased, in order to change the blood, and we reckon to bring to the gun half the number of birds from the eggs placed under hens. The property is shot flat every season, as we find from experience it is useless to leave hens outside; they either stray away to nest, or, if they lay at home, the young



W. A. Rouch.

COCK OVER.

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A STAND BY THE OLD OAK.

W. A. Rouch.

ones dwindle and die, probably because there is an insufficiency of insect life, owing to the number of tame birds annually reared on so small an area, and also from the fact that we have only five acres of arable land on the whole estate. Two keepers are employed permanently, and a youth is engaged from April until the coverts are shot. We are often asked how much pheasants cost per head to rear, but this must necessarily depend to a great extent upon the property, the aptitude of the keepers, and the amount of natural food. Here it is all artificial feeding, and we are forced to feed hard in order to keep our birds at home. Taking an average of fifteen years, our feed bill works out at about 2s. 3d. per bird killed, which includes feeding the penned birds. From this account it might appear as if slaughter and not sport were the order of the day; but it is not so. Thanks to the hilly nature of the ground, there are stands which test the skill of many a good shot. The best of these is the Happy Valley, and if we are only favoured



W. A. Rouch.

TWO GUNS BUSY.

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W. A. Rouch.

THE HAPPY VALLEY STAND.

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with a west wind, plenty of birds come quite out of shot. The next is the Chinese Cottage, which takes its name from a cottage on the beat, built by General Conway, who took the idea from Strawberry Hill in Hardwick Woods. Rabbits abound, and the great difficulty is to keep them under; owing to the light nature of the soil they seem to breed the whole year round. The burrows are exceedingly deep, and stopping them out is a matter of some labour. The best plan is to ferret first, then stop lightly, go round again, close any holes that have been opened, and pin a piece of paper previously dipped in spirits of tar on each hole. The great point is to vary the method of procedure, for rabbits soon become accustomed to any particular smell.

For the second shoot we have used eight-bore wads soaked in paraffin and thrown down the burrows as far as possible, always stopping and papering after a day or two. Naturally sport on an estate such as we have described must necessarily be artificial



W. A. Rouch.

IN THE BOTTOM OF THE WOOD.

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in the extreme, yet it is an excuse to entertain a few friends once or twice a year, and if we cannot give them the best of sport, we can always give them the kindest of welcomes.

THE TOILET . OF BIRDS.

NOT the least remarkable of the peculiarities which mark out the birds as the most refined class of living things is the attention they pay to their toilet. They are the only creatures which bathe for cleanliness' sake; beasts may lick themselves, or wallow luxuriously for pleasure—in mud as readily as in water, or often more so—but deliberate washing in water is purely a bird custom. It is true that some groups content themselves with a "dry polish," rolling in sand or dust, such as larks and the whole pheasant family, but this indulgence is sought as eagerly as the bath, and no doubt is an excellent substitute. Very few birds both dust and wash, among them being Philip Sparrow, who is quite *au fait* with every indulgence which can make bird life enjoyable, with the exception of song—probably too refined a form of amusement for his sensual tastes.

But in addition to external sources of personal beautification, birds have on their own persons toilet requisites of a very interesting kind, although it is given to comparatively few to enjoy all of these at once. There is, in the first place, the pomatum-pot formed by the oil-gland, almost the only skin-gland, by the way, which birds possess. This is a heart-shaped mass situated on the upper surface of the root of the tail, and ending in a small pimple, often tufted with feathers, and exuding a buttery secretion with which the bird anoints its plumage. As might be expected, it is particularly well developed in water-fowl, and everyone must have seen the duck assiduously oiling its hair by rubbing its head on the root of its tail. But it is unusually copious in secretion in some land birds also; the great concave-casqued hornbill (*Dichoceros bicornis*) owes the yellow colour on its neck and some of the wing feathers to the very free supply it has of this natural brilliantine, which it assiduously applies every day when making its toilet. This staining power of the secretion is quite exceptional, as is also any odour attaching to it; but in the Muscovy drake it sometimes, at all events, is perfumed with musk, and in the sitting female and nestlings of the hoopoe it is credited with exhaling the horrible smell which gives this pretty bird its evil name in French and German proverbs.

The most curious fact about the oil-gland is that many birds get on perfectly well without one. Among these are the Amazon parrots and most cockatoos, the Argus pheasants, and all the giant flightless birds; while the



W. A. Kouch

CROSSING THE PARK.

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Something of the kind must also exist in many other birds, where it does not seem to have been noticed, as in the pigeons, which are very powdery birds, as anyone who has handled them much will testify. But books on birds usually mention these "powder-downs" as restricted to few groups, or to a few isolated members of large families; thus, among our hawks, the harriers have powder-patches, but no others. Powder appears to some extent to replace pomade in birds, for it will be noted that among the above birds are several in which the oil-gland is absent or inefficient, and none of the water-fowl have powdery plumage, so that the function of this mealy covering may be to throw off wet. It is certainly obvious that pigeons do not get wet so easily as most land birds, and in the pretty little cockatiel, a member of the cockatoo group, I have noticed that the plumage throws off water quite as well as a duck's, although this bird does not enter that element even to bathe, much preferring a shower-bath in the rain. Indeed, most of the parrot tribe seem to enjoy a shower, as also do pigeons.

But the greatest luxury of all would appear to be the comb, which is given here and there to the most incongruous birds in a way there is no accounting for. It is situated on the inner edge of the claw of the third toe—the first being, I should remark, the hind toe—and it is with this third toe that birds always scratch themselves, for some occult reason. For the third toe is not the nearest to the bird's head, nor is it the longest in every case, although usually so; while in birds like parrots, which have only two toes in front, it cannot be the middle one, as it is in most cases. This serrated claw is found in herons and cormorants, in nightjars and grebes, and in a few more isolated cases. In the nightjars it is most perfect, and it has been suggested that in their case it is a moustache-comb; but that explanation breaks down, because some of this family, such as the American night-hawk (*Chordeiles popetue*), have no moustache to comb, unlike our bird with its long, straggling bristles round the mouth. Nor are the herons bristly-mouthed, and yet their comb is a very good one, coming next to that of the nightjars. The barn owl and its kin, also, are exceptional among the owls in possessing this curious implement, and in their case there seems no possible reason why they alone of their family should be thus gifted. But in these owls the comb is still in a state of evolution, for in two specimens of the Andamanese barn owl (*Strix deroepstorffii*) which I examined I found it was not developed, and Mr. F. E. Beddard, the prospector to the Zoological Society, and Dr. Bowdler Sharpe of the British Museum, also found it absent in the curious bay owl (*Photodilus badius*) of India, each examining one specimen; the species is now known to normally possess the serrated claw, so it is variable in this point.

When once the structure exists, it is obviously of more use for scratching, since the teeth will serve to catch the vermin with which all birds are more or less infested, and this may explain its large size in the nightjars, whose tiny beak is not at all well adapted for ridding their persons of such unwelcome guests. Thus in the groups where it occurs, no doubt natural selection has tended to preserve it; at the same time, the case furnishes an excellent illustration of the fact, too often overlooked by zoologists, that no structure, however much needed, can be developed by selection until some strong innate tendency to produce it has appeared. Just as few birds, as I have already said, enjoy the pleasure of both sand and water baths, so few can claim to possess all the toilet appurtenances I have mentioned. The birds which have the best powder-puffs, the great Australian frog-mouthed nightjars or moreorks (*Podargus*), have no pomade or comb at their disposal; and the Argus pheasant, which of all birds gives up most for personal adornment, and spends



Rouch. PARK PLACE: CAPT. R. SANDIMAN BY CHINESE COTTAGE. Copyright

curious "rumpless" breed of fowls also lacks it, and yet these birds look as sleek as ordinary poultry. It is absent, or poorly developed, also in pigeons and nightjars.

Nature has been even more sparing in her distribution of another appurtenance of the bird's toilet-table—the powder-puff, whence the delicate powder which forms a bloom on the plumage of some species is derived. This powder emanates from certain peculiar feathers which disintegrate or rot as they grow, thus producing the powder. They may be scattered about the body, as in Amazon and grey parrots and cockatoos, or collected into large patches in definite regions, as on the breast and back of the herons, where they are very conspicuous when the feathers are parted so as to show them.

most of his time in a cleared space in the jungle, which he keeps neat and trim as his boudoir, has to perform his toilet without oil, powder, or comb. Yet all three are bestowed on the herons, some of the laziest of birds, which are no more energetic in their toilet than in anything else, being also singularly devoid of ornaments peculiar to the male sex.

It seems, therefore, that this partially-spread toilet-table is altogether a

mystery; but, after all, we know very little as yet of the intimate habits of birds as opposed to the broad general outlines of their life. It took me a long time to find out the universality of scratching with the third toe among birds; and I expect it will be longer yet before I, or anyone else, will succeed in getting a step further and explaining some of the inconsistencies of Nature I have touched on in this article.

FRANK FINN.

SOME WEST COUNTRY TOWN HALLS.

TAUNTON, Dunster, and Exeter are three typical West Country towns, each of which has curious and interesting survivals both of buildings and of customs. Taunton, whose ancient municipal buildings are of great interest, returned members to Parliament long before it had a mayor or municipality, though the town was old and rich, for the wool trade was started there as early as 1336. It returned members to Parliament in the reign of Edward I. These members were elected by all such citizens as were pot-wallopers, and none but genuine established out-and-out pot-wallopers might vote; anyone who had received cash from the town charities or was a stated pauper had to forego that privilege. There seems some doubt as to what a pot-walloper precisely was. But the current explanation is that he was any resident who had a house in which was a fire at his disposal on which he had "walloped" or boiled his own pot for six months. We believe agreements were sometimes made by which a person retained a right to boil his pot on the fire of a house, in token that he had not quite abandoned his rights as occupier. The hall at Taunton Castle, where the assizes were held, was built in 1577 by Robert Horn, Bishop of Winchester. His arms still remain on the walls. At the Bloody Assize, Judge Jeffreys held a commission at which he condemned 134 of the citizens and neighbourhood to death, besides transporting many more. The yarn market at Dunster is a most interesting little building, almost unique. The speciality of Dunster was the making of kerseymeres, of a kind known from their excellence as "Dunsters." It was built to be used as a kind of exchange, by George Luttrell, the owner of Dunster and its castle in 1600. It was repaired after the siege of the castle by Blake, who, it may be remembered, held Taunton very valiantly against the Cavaliers, and to show them that he had plenty of provisions, after he had come down to his last pig, he ordered that unfortunate animal to be beaten at different points all round the



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INTERIOR OF TOTNES GUILDHALL.

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circuit of the defences. "Ah!" thought the Cavaliers, with a sigh; "no lack of food there. Killing pigs again all over the town!" But it must have been serious work for the pig. It is not said who ate it ultimately. At Dunster the castle shot hit the yarn market, and pierced a beam. The hole made is, or was lately, to be seen. It is framed in an octagon, and is a model piece of design for open-sided buildings of this type.

The blade of Henry's sword is 37½ in. long, and is carried in civic processions. The King also presented the city with another relic—a cap of maintenance. It is a black felt cap, which is placed inside another of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. This outer cap was made in 1634. The sword of Edward IV. is a mourning sword, and is draped in black crape. It cannot be said to have brought good luck to Edward's friends in the neighbourhood. Eighteen years later Sir Thomas St. Leger, husband of the King's sister, Anne Duchess of Exeter, was beheaded with his esquire, Thomas Rame, in front of the town hall, for treason in rising to aid the Lancastrians. Richard III. was staying in the Bishop's Palace at the time, having just failed to catch the Bishop himself, Peter Courtney, of the house of the Earls of Devon.

Before this hall, in the days of James I., the heralds used to blow a trumpet on the day after the assizes closed, and proclaim the results of their visitation, and enquired into the arms borne by the county families. If anyone had assumed arms without duly getting the licence of the college, or bore arms which he had no right to hold, he was denounced by the herald as committing an illegal act. The three chief buildings of Exeter marked the relative importance of the Church, the King, and the Commons by their respective size—viz., the Cathedral, Rougemont Castle, and the town or common hall. But the town probably claimed that its walls—parts of which still exist—were the property of the citizens. It is noted that in the boyhood of Sir William Carew, a son of Sir William Carew, who was sent to school at Exeter, the boy used to play truant, and was



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TOTNES GUILDHALL AND SEXTON'S HOUSE.

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generally found playing on the city walls. When found he would climb a battlement, and threaten to throw himself over unless let alone, declaring that, if he did so, the worthy alderman who was his temporary guardian would be hanged for neglecting him. On hearing of this conduct, his father came in great wrath, and had him led through the streets of Exeter in a leash, like a dog, by a servant, and for a punishment coupled him to one of his hounds, "and so continued him for a time."

For distinction and excellence, both inside and out, it would be difficult to beat the old town hall of the very ancient Devonshire town of Totnes, on the Dart. It is one of the oldest boroughs and



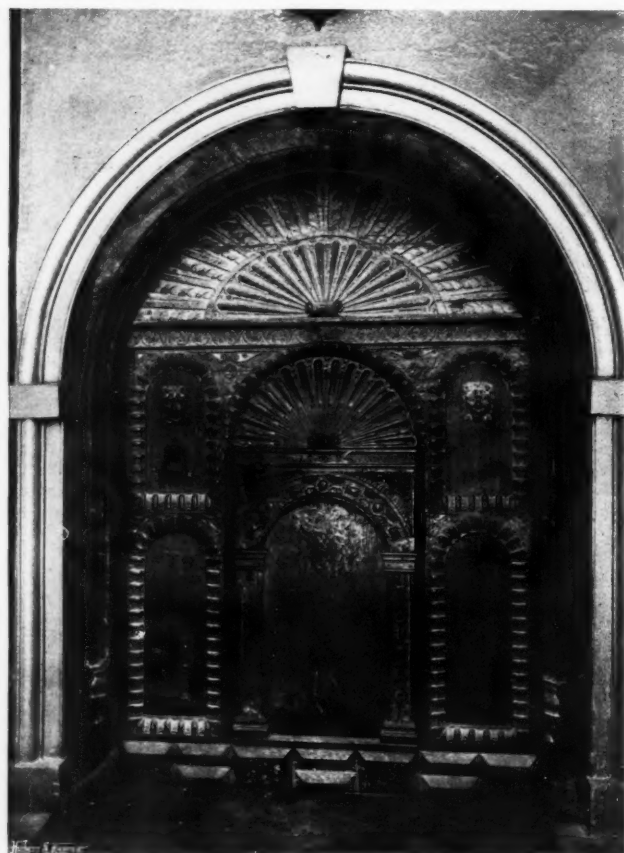
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DUNSTER CASTLE AND YARN MARKET.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

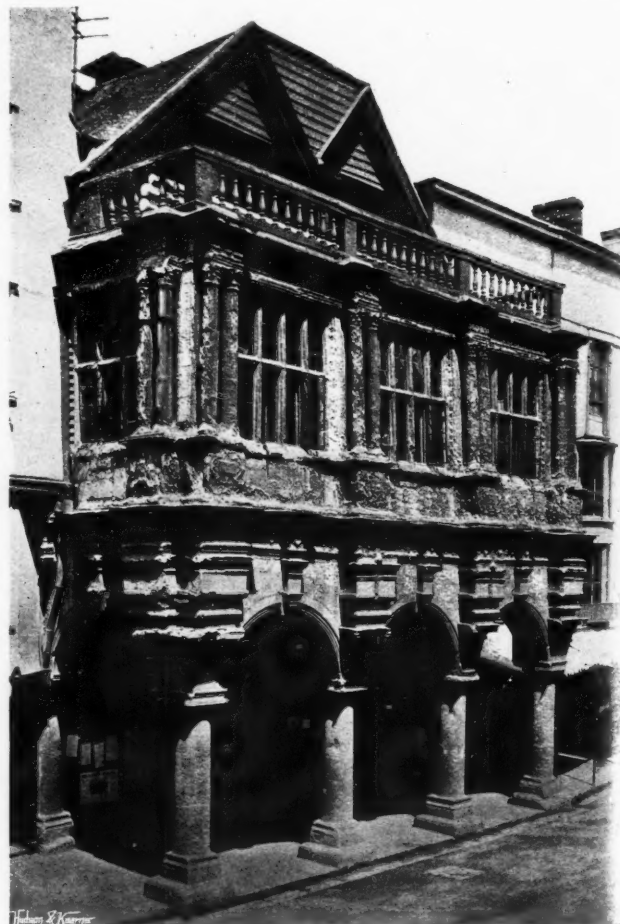
bull was said rather to enjoy it, and to look forward to Saturday afternoons. In the morning the dogs might be heard joyfully barking, and the bull roaring defiance from his stable. The stocks used to be kept in the town hall; but it does not preserve so many monuments of justice as that at Fordwich, near Canterbury. Fordwich Town Hall is a very plain old building outside, brick below, timber and brick or timber and plaster, above, standing in what is now a village, and on the edge of a wide village

green. Inside it are some curious remains of old town justice—viz., the bar, to which prisoners were called, and the ducking stool, which is kept on a thick timber beam running across the chamber. On this stand two old drums, and on the floor are two chests, one very ancient, to hold the records. It is creditable to the people of Fordwich to have kept their little town hall; but it will be seen that on the whole municipal buildings have suffered less than the churches, either from dilapidation or from restoration, which has destroyed nearly all the human and secular interest of so many county churches. This is an age of care and interest in all good old remains and survivals, and in the case of the town halls there is not only a revival of interest, but also a new life in the bodies which occupy them. Provincial and local feeling are awake, local councils are no longer looked down upon, but enlist those of more than local standing and position in their ranks, and it is quite possible that many of the old buildings which have suffered will be restored. It may be



Frith. FRONT DOOR OF EXETER GUILDHALL. Copyright

corporations in the West. Its five hundredth mayor was elected in 1876, and the record of mayors is complete since 1377. Like Taunton, Totnes began to thrive as a clothing town. But it was one of the very earliest British Settlements, and there is a curious legend, part of the Roman-British myth, that a "Brutus," who became a famous chief of Britain, landed there from the Dart, and the stone on which he first stepped is pointed out. The town hall is said to be part of the old priory of St. Mary. The fittings, including stalls for the whole council, a seat with a handsome canopy for the mayor, a central three-sided table and desk, and a Royal escutcheon on the walls, are all complete, and the greater part of one period. The windows are good also, and the few portraits and busts, with the bronze figure of Justice added later, but in quite good keeping with the place, are appropriate ornaments. Bull-baiting, as a civic custom, was kept up at Totnes till less than a hundred years ago. The town



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THE GUILDHALL, EXETER.

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possible to enlist outside interest in them, and that persons who possess drawings, old portraits, maps, or furniture, either once belonging to the county town hall or suitable to find a place there, may present them. One curious instance occurs in which the citizens of an old town have taken the greatest care of their plate after the town hall was lost. This is Orford, in Suffolk. A most interesting civic "regalia," three maces (one very fine

and two very old), old silver bowls, as large as washing basins, water-bailiff's badges, patterns of the size of which oysters might be caught in the river, and the old records of the corporation, are carefully kept. It is hoped to rebuild the town hall, and to get a "safe deposit" in which these fine relics may yet be on view. The town property is carefully administered, and is increasing in value.

C. J. CORNISH.

ANCIENT SERPENT-LORE.

SINCE the day

"When Fa'her Adie first pat spade in
The bonnie yaird o' ancient Aden,"

the serpent has been one of the most fascinating of living creatures; strange tales and traditions have been woven round the serpent and his race, and to them supernatural powers of

wisdom, cunning, and fell malignity have been attributed. By much the same process of reasoning as that which induces certain tribes of superstitious and uneducated natives to worship or propitiate the Spirit of Evil, it came to pass that in the ancient days of Egypt, China, and other regions of the far-off East, the serpent became the symbol of the power and majesty of the supreme authority.

In 1737 the French translation of the Latin edition of Mr. Jean Jacques Scheuchzer's "*Physique Sacrée ou Histoire-Naturelle de la Bible*" made its appearance, and it is from that beautifully illustrated and exceedingly interesting work that the pictures which accompany this article are taken.

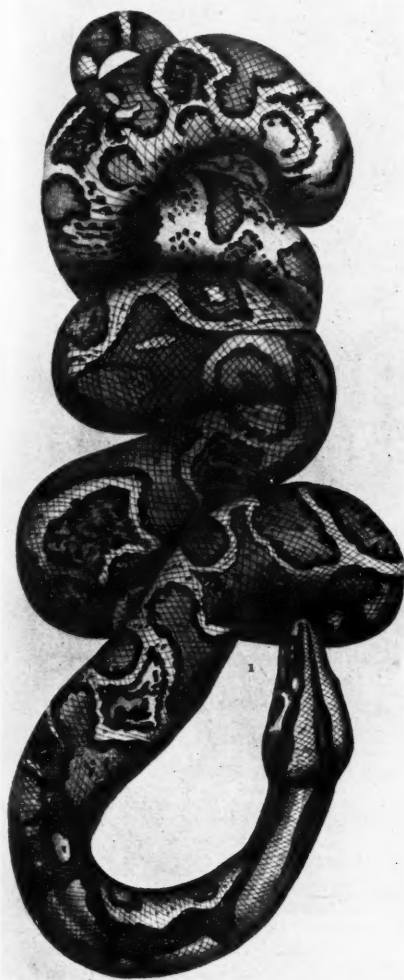
When Earth, fresh from the hands of the Creator, was at her best and fairest, the Serpent, we are told, eluding even the vigilance of the guardian angels, crept into the

secluded glades of the fair Garden of Eden, bringing with him in his stealthy approach the Spirit of Evil, who, as it is written, beguiled the Woman, and with her, as after all was only natural, fell the Man. Of this particular serpent no authentic picture has been handed down to us, but from those days up to these, the Woman, the Man, and the Serpent have dwelt in close association, and the old, old play that was first performed in the Garden of Eden is still being played to crowded houses, and with but faint signs of diminishing interest on the part of the audience.

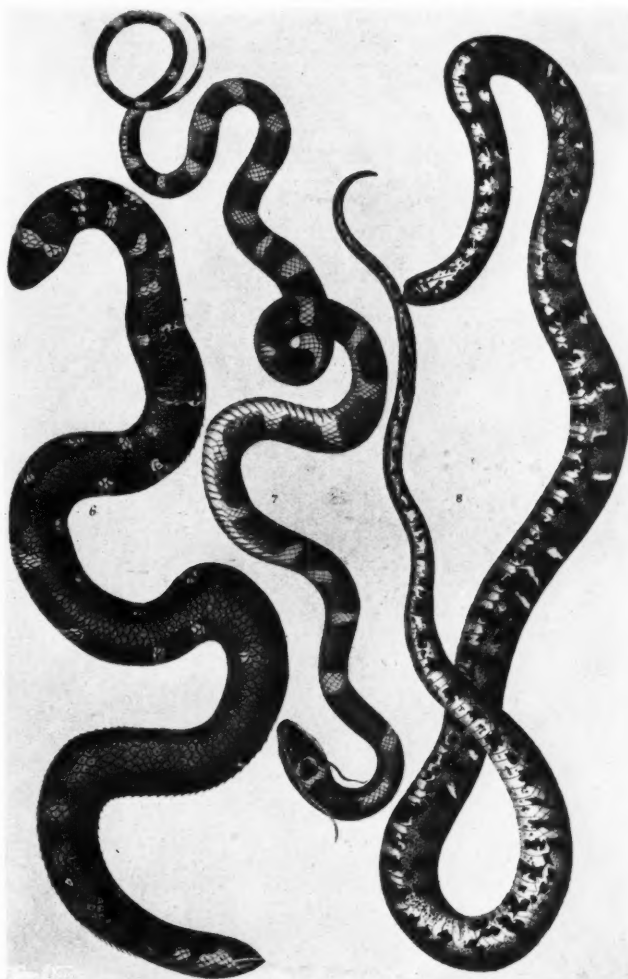
This was the first Serpent, and, according to a note in the margin of the very interesting work already alluded to, the learned author gives it as his opinion that "there is no doubt that the invincible aversion which we have for serpents owes its origin to the fall of our first parents, and to the seduction of the Devil who appeared in the form of a snake." The author continues his observations by remarking that the Pharisees in particular are to be compared with serpents, and he appears to have a readily understood prejudice against people of Pharisaical habits, for he says in "favour of, or rather to the eternal disgrace of the race of Pharisees, we will give several illustrations repre-

senting some of the serpents preserved in the famous cabinet of Mr. Lincke."

Our author then takes us on to St. Luke x., 19, where, according to a literal translation of the old French version, the promise was given to the Apostles that they should be enabled to crush serpents and scorpions under their feet; and that, according to St. Mark xvi., 18, "they should hunt serpents, and if they should have drunk a mortal poison it should not hurt them." Some of the Fathers of the Church—such as Clement of Alexandria, Bede, and Theophylact—took these words in a mystical sense; but Mr. Scheuchzer is strongly of opinion that they are to be taken in a literal sense, and that as the Apostles were missionaries and obliged to travel in places where venomous reptiles abounded, so they were provided with means, miraculous or material, of counteracting the evil effects of poison. In connection with this there is, of course, the snake-stone, of which we have all heard, and which is supposed to be a remedy against the poison of snake-bites. Some authors treat the snake-stone as a myth, and declare that there is no stone known to science which is capable of being used as an antidote to snake-bites. Neither is there; but, on the other hand, there is a compound which, when made up, takes the form of a stone-like—or, rather, clay-like—object, and it is, no doubt, extremely efficacious,



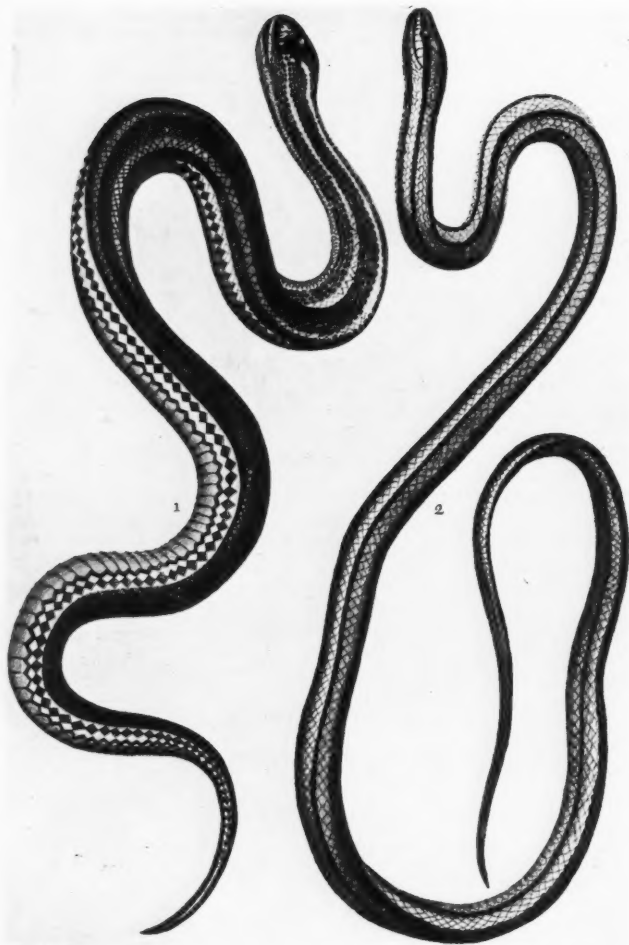
A GREAT AMERICAN VIPER.



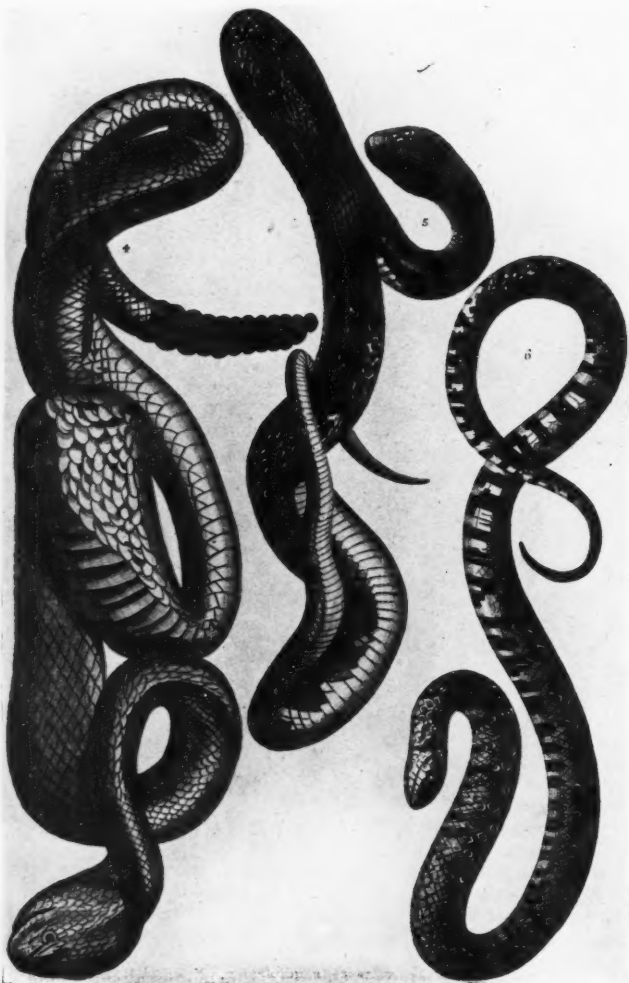
BRILLIANTLY-COLOURED SNAKES.

but it is very difficult to induce the natives of the region where it is made to part with it. Not long ago, however, the life of a British officer in West Africa, who had been severely wounded by a poisoned arrow, was saved by the timely application of the native snake-stone.

In St. Luke xi., 11 and 12, allusion is again made to serpents and scorpions, and the old French context is almost



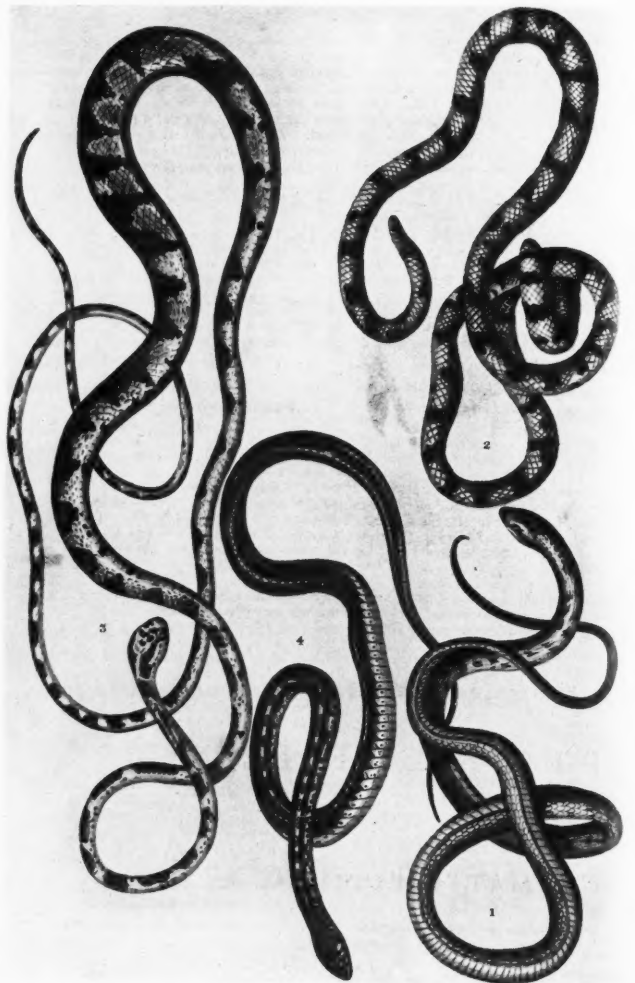
THE SERPENT RACE.



RATTLESNAKES AND VIPERS.

identical with that of our own Bible, "or if he asks for an egg, shall he be given a scorpion?" and here the marginal note in the old book is of considerable interest. It says: "But no doubt it will be asked, What is the connection between a scorpion and an egg? Are they not entirely different in shape and colour? It should be known that there are not only black and brown scorpions, but that in Syria and around Jerusalem white scorpions are to be found."

Then to illustrate how useless it is to fly from Fate comes an old story taken from the "Anthology," in which it is pointed out that a shipwrecked mariner having, after long battling with



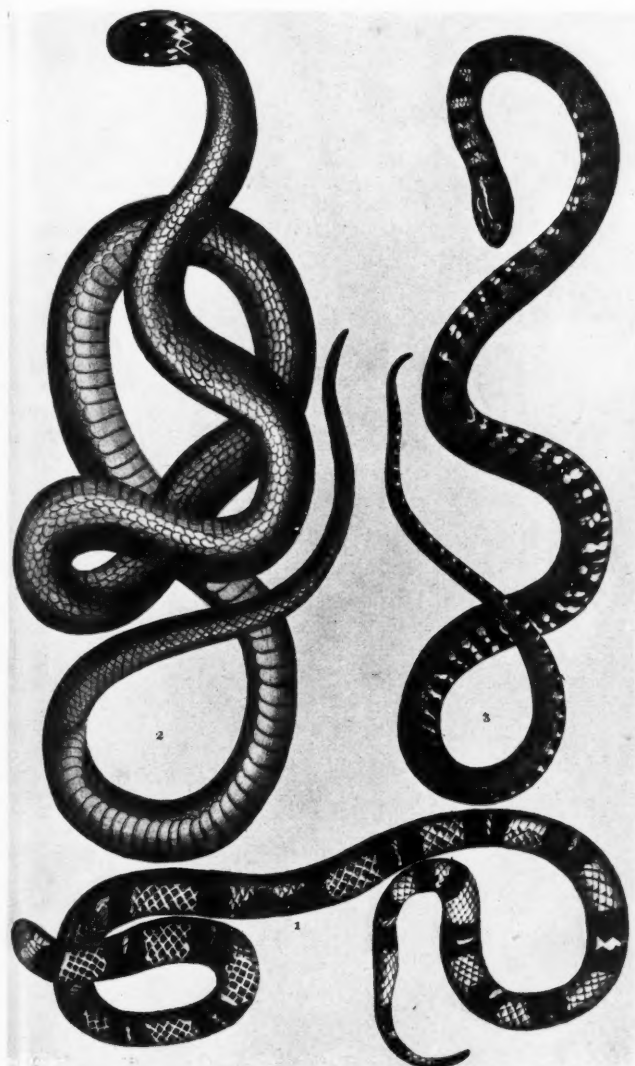
TYPES OF SERPENTS.

the waves, succeeded in swimming ashore, threw himself down exhausted and naked on the sandy banks of a Libyan river and was immediately killed by a viper. "It was hardly worth while," concludes the author, "to struggle against the angry seas, and swim safe to land, only to find awaiting him the death from which he was fleeing." As an instance of the subtlety and intelligence of serpents, we read that when they hear the approaching sound of the snake-charmer's flute, they stop up their ears in order not to hear it, and, adds the author, the method they employ for this purpose is to press one ear hard against the ground, while they insert the point of their tail in the other one.

Long, long ago took place a famous scene in which the principal part was played by serpents. Throned in all his majesty sat the dread Pharaoh, monarch of Egypt; before him were the magicians and wise men of his court. Aloof and alone stood Moses and Aaron, the representatives of the persecuted race. Challenged to perform a miracle, Aaron cast down the staff which he held in his hand, and it immediately became transformed into a serpent. Not to be outdone, the Egyptian sorcerers followed suit with their own staves, which in their turn duly appeared as living snakes, which were promptly devoured by the snake developed from Aaron's rod. But Geoffroy St. Hilaire remarks: "There are certain snakes which become absolutely rigid and rod-like if pressure is applied in a particular manner to the back of the neck, and they speedily recover from the cataleptic trance into which they have been thrown when the pressure is removed." It is also quite conceivable, he adds, that had Aaron managed to get hold of a Hamadryad or Ophiophagus, it would in all probability have proceeded to devour the other snakes with the greatest promptitude. The lovely and passionate Cleopatra, whose many wiles

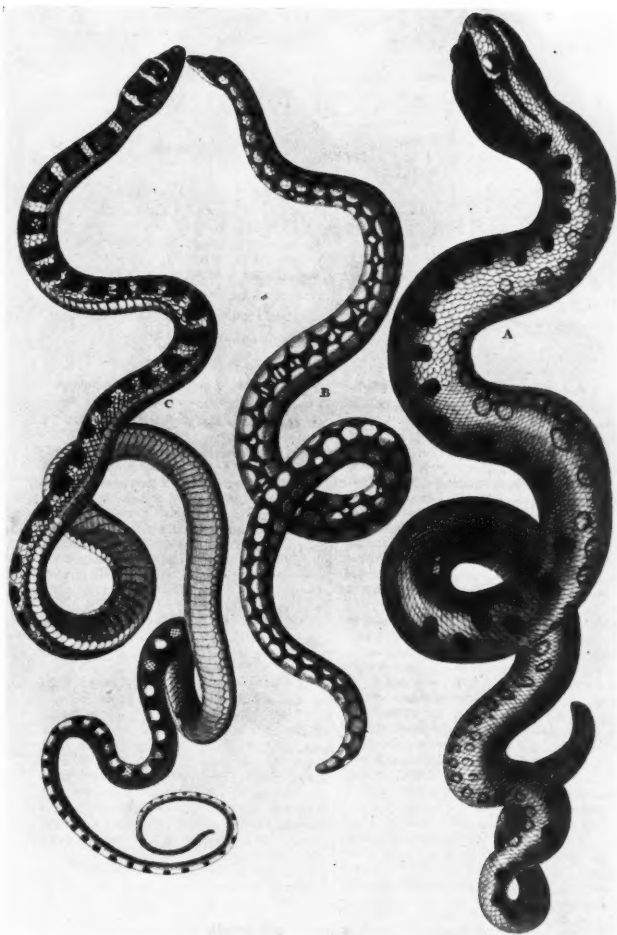
and fascinations procured for her the appellation of "the Serpent of Old Nile," finding that love and fortune had failed her, sought the dread issue from her woes by the poisonous bite of an asp, and I fear me that if the description given in the old book of the effect of the bite of an asp is true, then the passage of Egypt's whilom queen to the world of the Unknown must indeed have been a lingering and painful journey, for according to Dio-corides, "as soon as the asp has bitten the place becomes inflamed and hard and reddened by the tension, pains come on at intervals, sometimes burning and sometimes cold, the agony becomes overwhelming, sweats break out, and the patient is seized with shivering and trembling, the extremities of the body stiffen, the glands become swollen, the hair stands on end, the limbs become livid, over all the body spreads excruciating pain, like the pricking of a thousand burning needles." So subtle is Nature's alchemy that modern chemistry, with all its appliances, has not yet succeeded in separating the active principles of snake poison, or even in distinguishing between the poison of different snakes, although the venom of the viperine snakes possesses the peculiar quality of invariably destroying the coagulability of the blood. This is the more surprising, when we consider that for hundreds of years many eminent scientists have been seriously occupied in the study and analysis of snake poison, in the hope both of discovering an antidote to its deadly effects, and of being able to employ so active an agent for remedial purposes.

Mythical serpents still linger in our memory. The hair of

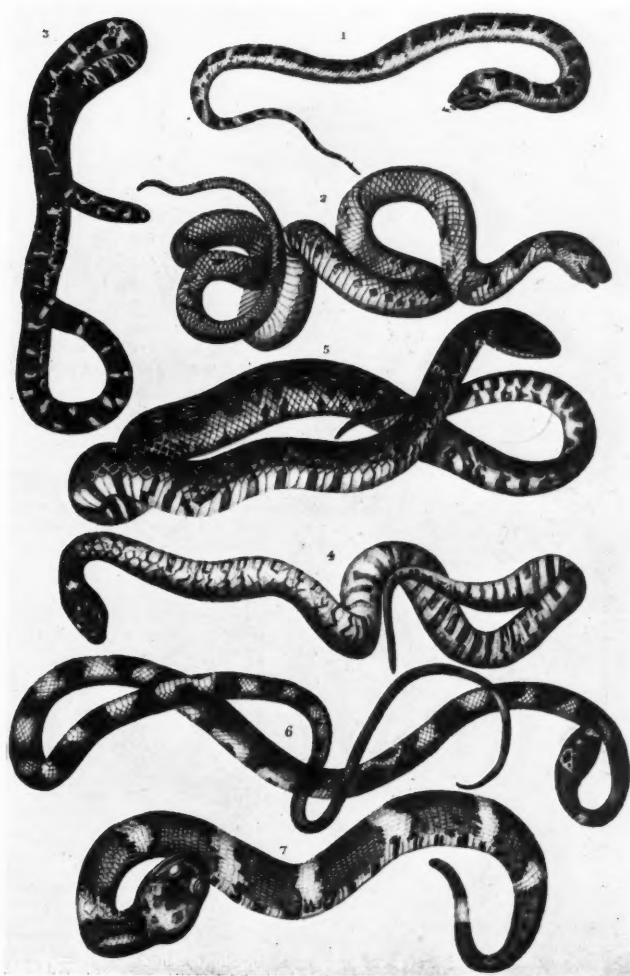


AFRICAN AND AMERICAN SERPENTS.

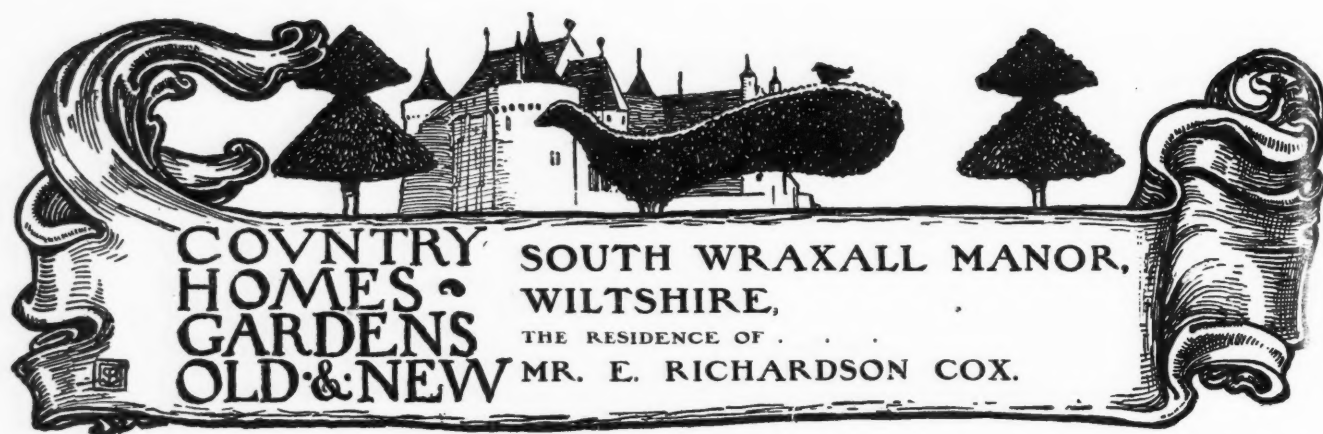
the Gorgon was composed of writhing, hissing snakes; in his cradle the infant Hercules strangled two serpents with his childish fists; painters and sculptors have portrayed the terrible struggles of Laocoon and the serpent; the awful combat described in the Apocalypse, between St. Michael and the Dragon, is still memorialised upon our English coinage. And fresh, perhaps, in the memory of most of us is the terrible serpent of "Robinson Crusoe," which, heralded by an appalling cloud of dust, pursued the Crusoe family for miles, and finally ended its portentous attack by swallowing the ass, a feat for the doing of which, if memory serves me aright, the serpent suffered dearly. T. H. B.



VENOMOUS REPTILES.



VIPERS.



IT is not very often that we are able to depict and describe a late Plantagenet or early Tudor manor-house, recovered from the approaches of decay, adopted as a residence, and made beautiful with sweet-scented gardens, as we do to-day.

The Wiltshire house of South Wraxall is already known to the readers of *COUNTRY LIFE*, in which its wonderful interior has been illustrated (No. 377). It is a very celebrated specimen of fifteenth-century architecture, well known to all students, and its venerable details have been drawn and illustrated as very notable examples of the time. The place underwent some reconstruction in the reign of Elizabeth, and again in the time of James I., when its very remarkable and beautiful fireplaces and mantels, with much panelling, were added. It has had the happy fortune in these later times to fall upon good and seemly days, for Mr. Richardson Cox, with the eye of imagination, recognising its capabilities, venerating its character, and appreciating its extraordinary architectural interest, took it in hand, and between 1900 and 1902, with the assistance of Mr. A. C. Martin, as his architect, made it the beautiful place we illustrate. Much thought and excellent judgment have been exercised in this regeneration of South Wraxall Manor, which, from partial decay, has been restored with absolute fidelity to its original character. To remove any modern incongruities, and to preserve whatever the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries had bestowed upon the manor-house, seem to have been the objects, and lovers of our domestic architecture will be grateful to Mr. Cox for his careful preservation of a very celebrated example, while many will be interested by and charmed with the lovely gardens which he has created about it.

The manor-house stands about three miles north-west of the old Wiltshire clothing town of Bradford, in a district which is singularly rich in good architecture, both domestic and ecclesiastical. Here was seated the ancient and influential family of Long, whose members appear to have represented Wiltshire in Parliament for something like 500 years. Some writers have discerned traces of the thirteenth century in their manor-house, but the experienced eye fails to detect them, though there may well be foundations of the time. It seems more safe to ascribe the present house to Robert Long, its first-recorded possessor, who was on the Commission of the Peace in 1426, and was Member of Parliament for the shire in 1433. The edifice thus belongs, like Haddon, South Wingfield, and other choice examples, to a very interesting period, in which the spirit of the Middle Ages prevailed, and yet when the tide of change had begun to rise, and the conditions which had hitherto shaped the dwelling-places of our forefathers were changing, and the way was opening for a transformation in style altogether. The time of turbulence and danger had passed away, though it came again with the struggle of the Roses, and later on with the Civil War of the seventeenth century. Thus, though the frowning gateways remained as a prominent feature, they had lost most of their military character, and had become places where the porter might have his lodging and open the gate to the welcome guests of his lord. Such is the gatehouse at South Wraxall, one of the most excellent examples in England; simple in character, indeed, with its low Tudor arch, plainly moulded, its excellent dripstone, its angle buttresses, its lovely oriel window, and the quaint chimney on the slope of the high-pitched roof. There is a winding staircase on





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THE ENCLOSED GARDEN.

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THE GARDEN PATH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

one side whereby the porter ascended to the room over the archway, which is lighted by the oriel window; and there are "squints" on either side through which he might take stock of the prowler.

Before we say more about the house, a few words must be devoted to its former owners, to whom it owed all its character. Successive members of the family of Long continued to reside at South Wraxall, and their monuments may be seen in the neighbouring church of St. James, in the

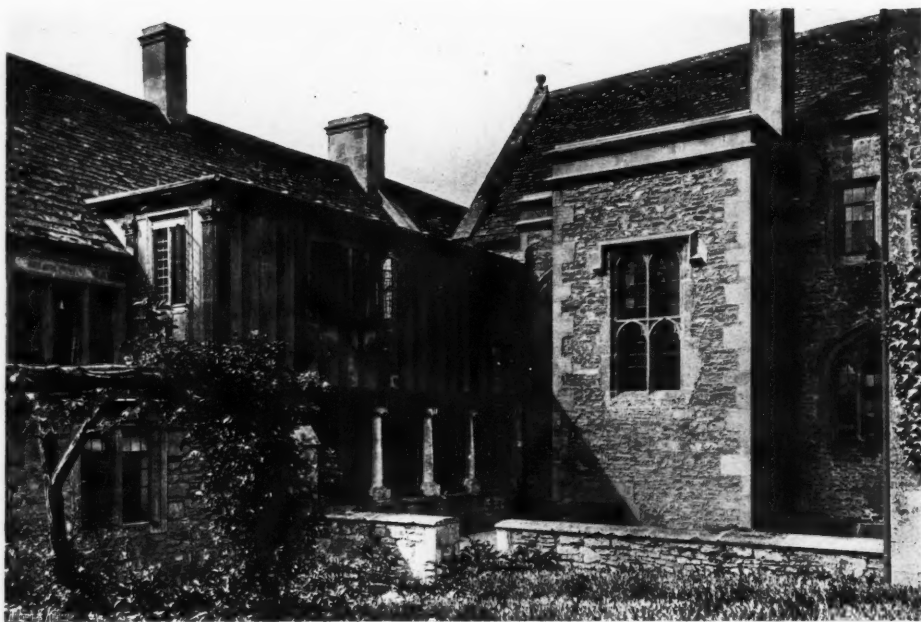
chantry or chapel erected about the year 1566 by Sir Robert Long. The family was prolific, and its branches were installed at Potterne, Little Cheverell, and elsewhere, from one of which are descended the Longs of Rood Ashton, the Right Hon. W. H. Long, M.P., of that place being a principal landowner at South Wraxall and in its neighbourhood. There was a baronetcy in the family, which became extinct on the death of the second baronet at an advanced age in 1710. His father, Sir Walter Long, had been a prominent Parliamentarian and an active member of the House of Commons for many years. He was one of the seven members sent to the Tower in 1628, and one of the eleven excluded members charged by the Army with stirring up strife between them and Parliament in January, 1647. He raised a troop of

horse, with which he fought at Edgehill, where he was wounded; but afterwards incurred the displeasure of the Parliament, and, joining Charles II. in exile, was raised to the baronetage by that monarch in 1661.

Now we feel free to approach the house from which this race of prominent Wiltshiremen sprang. In the excellent picture taken from under that most picturesque gateway, we may see how pleasant the approach is, for there are noble elms and farm buildings there, and two tall outer

gate-posts, set in a rough stone wall and crowned with urns, flank the path. On our left, as we near the gatehouse, is a buttressed wall, over which trees and ivy overhang, while a pleasant garden is on the right, and through the arch of the gatehouse we have a glance into the courtyard which we shall presently enter. But we are first tempted to survey the quaint range of buildings which is in line with the gateway on the right, with its high roof-ridge, mullioned windows and buttresses, and the old domestic offices, now judiciously tempting ivy and other plants to climb, but not to enshroud the features.

We are disposed not less to linger in the beautiful garden, which is on this front of the house. Notice the admirable grouping—the verdant grass and paths, with the low terrace wall



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THE COVERED WAY.

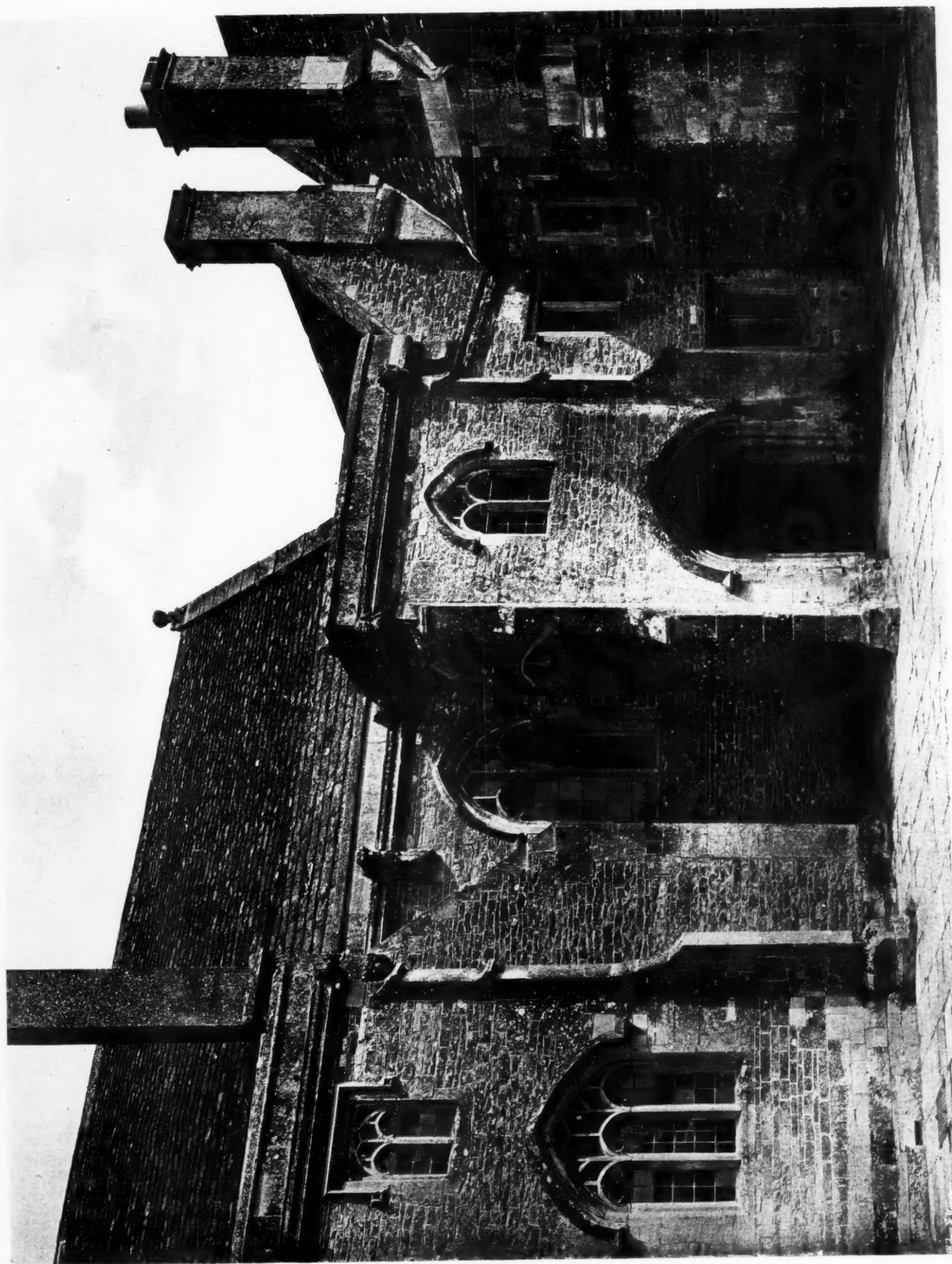
"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE OUT-BUILDINGS.

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THE ENTRANCE PORCH.

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THE FLAGGED WALK.

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as a frontage to the architectural picturesqueness, the dial raised aloft on its Jacobean pillars, the grey, ivy-clad wall on the right, with a splash of vivid colour in the geraniums hanging from its vase, and the fine trees in the distance. Observe that the terrace wall is itself by way of becoming a garden, for it is loosely laid, and you ascend by well-worn steps and between the quaintest of vases to the terrace itself—a flagged terrace, the stones not too well jointed, but with space cunningly left in which some things pleasant to look at have rootage. It is not all flagged either, for

space is reserved, stone-edged and orderly, for a colony of the best of roses. The effect is most happy, and we cannot extol it too highly. The same simple, beautiful, and appropriate style of gardenage is found on the other side of the house, where the long flagged walk runs the length of the raised terrace to the north gateway. The manor-house is here most picturesque in varied skyline, light and shade, picturesque windows, roofs and doors, and the singularly quaint Jacobean loggia, where a range of

pillars supports the upper storey, making a covered way or cloister of unusual character below. The flagged walk is well hedged, and has on one side a most magnificent herbaceous border of generous proportions, wherein tall-growing queenly flowers—blue delphiniums of many shades, flaunting poppies, larkspurs, phloxes, foxgloves, and, later on, flashing helianthus and dahlias of many hues—are all gay in their radiant splendour throughout almost the whole garden year. By three steps from the terrace we descend to the green turf which is on the other side, where is an urn of unusual

type, and then by a few steps more, between two classic figures on pedestals, we come to the croquet lawn. Again, the terrace walls are roughly laid for wall gardening, and a host of alpine and other plants make gay the rough stonework. The foliage here is also beautiful, and the contrasts of colour in the grey house, the emerald lawns, the many flowers, and the dark masses of trees, are superb.

And now, having tasted the delights of the gardens without, we may pass through the gate-house into the



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THE WINDOWS OF THE DRAWING-ROOM.

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THE NORTH GATEWAY.

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UNDER THE GATEHOUSE.

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THE COURTYARD.

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venerable courtyard, which, it may be observed, as at Great Chalfield and Tisbury, is not entirely surrounded by domestic buildings. The area is in two levels divided by a low wall, and there is an ascent from the lower level to the lawn and garden, which have been laid out on the upper half of the space. Urns are upon this wall, and Portugal laurels at intervals add to the distinction. The ancient porch giving admission to the hall is on the right, and the high-pitched roof of the hall, the Perpendicular two-light and three-light windows, with traceried heads, the splendid Jacobean window of the drawing-room, and the other buildings of the interior of the court, lend an appearance to the grey old structure which is almost unique. The porch, always an important feature, is very remarkable at South Wraxall, having angle buttresses, a deeply-moulded arched doorway, and a picturesque window above, while the gargoyles are of very singular character, as will be seen. Mediæval feeling pervades this part of the house entirely, and the grotesque carvings, excellent details of the cusped window lights and weathered stonework, enhance the effect. The interior of the house shall not be described afresh at any length, extraordinarily interesting as it is, with its magnificent series of carved Jacobean mantels and its splendid panelling. The hall is very interesting and imposing. It is lofty, lighted by its ancient windows, and has a Jacobean fireplace, roof, and screen. Mr. Hudson Turner, in his excellent volumes on "English Domestic Architecture," describes the structural arrangements. He speaks of the usual servants' passage behind the screen, with a door at one end to the porch, and at the other to what was called the servants' or pump court. A door at the

restored is a thing to be thankful for. There was room for judicious selection and careful constructive thought, and both were exercised. It would have been so easy to spoil the place with modernity; but the spell remains unbroken, and there is no jarring note. We congratulate Mr. Cox and his architect. We congratulate him especially upon his lovely and wholly appropriate gardens, his beautiful trees, his island surrounded by the fish-pond, and upon all the picturesque, attractive, and admirable features which add so much to the charm of this old English abode. Long may the fireside smoke—emblem of domestic peace rising to the outer world—continue to ascend from the chimneys of Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts of this old Wiltshire dwelling.

IN THE GARDEN.

A WINTER-FLOWERING CLEMATIS.

WINTER to the mind that has no thought of the joys of garden is a season from which hardy flowers are absent—no colour, no fragrance, no little herald of sunnier days. But several plants are in full bloom in December and January, and one of them is a Clematis, which is called *C. calycina* or *C. balearica*. It is quite a leafy shrub, very dark green, and the sweet-smelling flowers are quite 2½ in. across, their cream-white colouring having a quiet charm, which one associates with the fragrant winter Honeysuckle called *Stanlishi*. The writer has this Clematis in a sunny corner, where the flowers receive a measure of protection from cold winds, but it is quite hardy, this protection being afforded simply for the sake of preserving the flower beauty. *C. calycina* is well worth a sunny corner on the garden wall.

EARLY-FLOWERING IRISES.

Though the early Irises are among the most beautiful of all garden flowers, and as hardy as their relatives in the summer border, it is seldom that one finds them in the border or in the greenhouse. *Iris persica*, the Violet-scented *reticulata*, *Heldreichii*, *Histrio*, *histrioides*, *bakeriana*, and *Tauri* are gems of colouring, the petals varying from blue to purple, and sometimes on a sky blue ground there are patches of white, an exquisite harmony of colouring to delight the eye. It is possible to grow the flowers in window-boxes, but to enjoy them in their unsullied beauty the wisest way is to plant the bulbs in pots, which should be placed in a cold greenhouse or frame and brought to the house when their presence is desired. Five or six bulbs in a 5 in. pot are sufficient, and this simple idea of grouping should be followed in the border, where, in the event of sharp frosts or heavy rains, a hand-light can be placed over them to form a covering. The most widely known of the bulbous Irises is *I. reticulata*; the flowers are intense purple

in colour, and as fragrant as a *Marie Louise Violet*, and the plant has the habit in certain soils of increasing with commendable rapidity. We believe it is on the Gunton Park estate, near Cromer, that this exquisite flower of the early year delights to roam. There, we are told, it spreads rapidly, and, strange to relate, the bulbs are not disturbed by rabbits, which seem to have a special fondness for the bulb luxuries of the garden. A potful of this beautiful Iris is a welcome New Year's present, and so strong is the scent of the flowers that two or three are sufficient to perfume a large room.

THE CANDLEBERRY GALE.

The botanical name of this aromatic shrub is *Myrica cerasifera*, and we mention this to indicate its whereabouts in the indices of garden books and journals. English names are frequently perplexing and sometimes misleading, and this is true of the commonest wild flowers of meadow and hedgerow. Candleberry Gale is also called Candleberry Myrtle and Bayberry, and one of the four members of the family is the Sweet Gale or Bog Myrtle of our peaty wastes. When reading Mrs. Alice Morse Earle's book recently, "Home Life in Colonial Days," the writer was delighted with a description of the use of Bayberries in the house. This description is as follows: "A natural and apparently inexhaustible material for candle was found in all the colonies in the waxy berries of the Bayberry bush, which grows in large quantities on our coasts. In the year 1748, a Swedish naturalist, Professor Kalm, came to America, and he wrote an account of the Bayberry wax, which I will quote in full. 'There is a plant here from the berries of which they make a kind of wax or tallow, and for that reason the Swedes call it the Tallow shrub. The English call the same tree the Candleberry tree or Bayberry bush. It grows abundantly in a wet soil, and seems to thrive particularly well in the neighbourhood of the sea. The berries look as if flour had been strewn on them. They are gathered late in autumn, being ripe about that time, and are thrown into a kettle or potful of boiling water. By this means their fat melts out, floats at the top of the



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THE ISLAND SURROUNDED BY THE FISH-POND. "COUNTRY LIFE."

back of this passage led to the buttery and pantry, in a line with which was the kitchen. There was a doorway also to the servants' court, under a covered way with the curious Jacobean cloister. The kitchen retained its old fireplace, the scullery being behind, and bedrooms were over with a mixture of sixteenth and seventeenth century carving. The pictures we have already given are a fine description of this admirable interior, which is particularly rich in its carved wood and stone work. The mantel in the hall is dated 1598, and there is another which is adorned with figures of Prudence, Justice, Arithmetic, and Geometry, and in the centre with a little figure of Pan. They still show the old guest-chamber in which legend says Sir Walter Long and Sir Walter Raleigh smoked their pipes together.

The men who lived at South Wraxall did not play any sounding part in their country's history, but they had their share in the State and loved their country home. How much of England's history have they discussed in its hall, how much of their own history has been unrolled within its walls! So full of the story of humanity is it that we seem almost to hear their footfall. It is a compendium of our domestic architecture during three centuries. We may trace in it the early forms of the Perpendicular, and the changes that it gradually underwent, until it became the pleasing style that we call Jacobean. There is much work here of English craftsmen, and, as some think, of the Germans who came skilled in the carving of mantelpieces. The details are extraordinarily interesting, as will be seen by the pictures. That such a house should be reverently

water, and may be skimmed off into a vessel; with the skimming they go on until there is no tallow left. The tallow, as soon as it is congealed, looks like common tallow or wax, but has a dirty green colour. By being melted over and refined it acquires a fine and transparent green colour. This tallow is dearer than common tallow, but cheaper than wax. Candles of this do not easily bend nor melt in summer as common candles do. They burn better and slower, nor do they cause any smoke, but yield rather an agreeable smell when they are extinguished. In Carolina they not only make candles out of the wax of the berries, but likewise sealing-wax." The plant enjoys a moist and peaty soil.

RANDOM NOTES.

Cotoneaster rotundifolia.—This is certainly one of the finest of the Cotoneasters for its fruit, for the berries, which are of a bright, glowing red, ripen in the autumn, and often remain fresh and bright till the spring. It forms a spreading bush, some 4ft. or 5ft. in height, and in the arrangement of its smaller branches it suggests *C. horizontalis*. This flattened, frond-like disposition of the shoots is very noticeable in the case of young seedling plants of *C. rotundifolia*, some of which might almost be confounded with *C. horizontalis*. The fruits of *C. rotundifolia* are, however, larger than those of the other, and remain longer on the plants. The leaves of *C. rotundifolia* are of a deep, glossy green, almost round, but with a short point.

They usually have a somewhat bronzy tint during the winter, and some drop, those from the uppermost portion of the strongest shoots being usually the first to fall; but the weather has a good deal to do with this, as in a mild winter the plant may be regarded as an evergreen. Grown in a large mass at Kew, this Cotoneaster forms a delightful winter feature, standing out as it does, by reason of its bright-coloured fruits, from its dull and bare surroundings.

A Purple-leaved Crab Apple.—This is known as *Pyrus Malus* var. *niedzwetzkyana*, and is not common in this country, though it was first introduced from the Continent five or six years ago. It is a handsome and distinct plant, with a bright reddish purple leaf, which keeps its full colour until it falls. The growth is vigorous, and, like the common Crab Apple, it will grow practically anywhere and in almost any soil. It is equally effective either as a bush or as a standard, though for general purposes the former will be found most effective. In a small state standards are rather thin, though probably when they get larger they will be more shapely and handsome. It is easily propagated by budding or grafting it on stocks of the common Crab Apple. Other forms of *Pyrus Malus* that are worth growing are *P. M.* var. *aurea*, with golden leaves, though a rather difficult plant to deal with; *P. M.* var. *coccinea*, which bears large, brilliant scarlet fruits; and *P. M.* var. *flore albo pleno*, with large, semi-double, pure white flowers.

DUCHESS OF BEDFORD'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

HIGH up on a hill, overlooking green fields and trees all russet purple in the winter sunshine, stands the Cottage Hospital built by the Duchess of Bedford at Woburn. Never was sickness housed in surroundings which gave more chance for returning health. About three years ago the idea came to the Duchess, and she herself sketched the plans. These were taken in hand by the Duke's architect, Mr. H. Percy Adams, who was also the architect of the King's Sanatorium at Midhurst, and he developed the outlines into the hospital as it stands to-day. The clear air of Woburn has preserved the building as fresh as on the day it was opened, May 22nd, 1903.

The photographs show the symmetrical proportions of the hospital and the appropriate style of the building, in which the "cottage" has not been forgotten. But photographs cannot reproduce the pleasant scheme of colour. The walls are rough-cast, the roofs red-tiled, the woodwork round the windows and the verandah are green. The timbered porch makes an effective contrast to the rest of the building, for the wood used is fine-toned British oak, and the Duke's arms are



Bolas.

THE HOSPITAL FROM DUKE'S DRIVE.

Copyright

blazoned in red, blue, and gold. The interior of the porch is panelled in teak, and there are teak seats in the entrance.

Within the hospital the first impression is a vista of hall and corridors. The hall is excellent, both in colour and design. The pillars of the simple yet satisfying arches are of teak, the arches are whitewashed, and the staircase, newels, and gallery are all of teak. There is also a charming little recess, where the visitors' book is kept, and this shows some very handsome teak panelling. The floor of the hall is "terrazzo," made of grey and white marble, and the hall fireplace is carried out in yellow tiles. The latter is quite flat, in order to prevent any unnecessary dust. The corridors are carpeted in grey and red, and the walls are whitewashed.

The building is divided into two parts—the men's wing, as you enter, lies to the right, the women's to the left, with a reception-room and dining-room to balance. The walls of the reception and dining rooms are for the present one-third whitewashed, two-thirds distempered in a cool blue-green to form a high dado. They have teak mantel-pieces with yellow tiles, teak doors with "penny-metal" fittings, and broad window-sills, decorated with vases of beautiful chrysanthemums. The sofas and chairs in the reception-room are upholstered in a delightful rose-patterned chintz.

Both wards are tiled halfway up in pale green, with a band of deeper colour, the upper part is white enamel paint, and the rose-patterned chintz reappears again in the easy-chairs. The wards contain accommodation for four men, four women, and two children, and all the fittings are of the newest design, the most antiseptic nature. There are carbolic rollers with white-tiled tops, movable heating apparatus, gun-metal chandeliers, glass medicine shelves, and china electric fittings. There are no



Bolas.

ONE OF THE WARDS.

Copyright

corners; every bit of woodwork is rounded off. The wit of man could not devise more "dodges" for routing the foul fiend "dirt." Everywhere, too, one sees evidences of the Duchess's thoughtfulness; the quaintest rocking-chairs for child patients are her idea, and are in the form of grotesque dogs and cocks—most charming toys. Attached to each ward is a bathroom, with white baths raised from the ground, and the corridor windows are practically composed of glass ventilators, made on a "venetian blind" principle, so that fresh air is continually flowing through the hospital.

Attached to each of the large wards is a "sun-room"—a device of the Duchess's. This is a kind of semi-circular conservatory, where the patients can sit and sun themselves, and look out over the lawns to the woods beyond. On the day I saw the hospital, although it was mid-November, a young girl was sitting out of doors, reviving in the crystal-clear air, and casting off the dread beginnings of phthisis.

The operating-theatre and its fittings are, of course, on the newest and most antiseptic lines. There are even pedal contrivances



Bolas.

THE STAIRCASE.

Copyright

for turning on the water, when the doctors wish to wash their hands, so that they need not touch the taps. There are glass jars, glass shelves, and a glass case for the instruments, and the very air is filtered.

The kitchen department is calculated to excite envy in the heart of every house-keeper. The kitchen itself has white walls and a red-tiled floor, all the fittings are green, and all the crockery is white. The larder is white tiled and has marble shelves, which Mr. Adams says are really no dearer than slate, although they look so expensive. There is a delightful green and white scullery with a white-tiled sink, and an equally attractive housemaid's pantry. All are admirably constructed as regards space, light, and cleanliness.



Bolas.

THE OPERATING-THEATRE.

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Bolas.

ONE OF THE BEDS.

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It is possible, too, by an ingenious arrangement of doors to aerially disconnect the kitchen department completely from the rest of the building.

Upstairs the matron, the nurses, and the servants sleep in rooms leading from wide and airy white and grey passages. Each room displays once more the dominant colours. There are white walls with green picture moulding, and white-tiled fireplaces, green ware, white, pink, and green quilts, and rose-patterned chairs. The matron's room is designed with a delightful recess, in which books and music and a writing-table can find a place. The window of this recess is seen over the porch. The servants' bedrooms are just as daintily furnished as the rest of the rooms. They are hung with rose-patterned chintz curtains, and have rose-patterned screens, while the rest of the fittings are green and white. From every window on the upstairs floor are views of swelling woodlands and green meadows.

Above this floor are spacious boxrooms, and below stairs is the domain of the electrician. There is electric light throughout the building, and it is, of course, manufactured on the premises. The engineer in command points out with pardonable pride the excellences of his engine, and the device for pumping water for the hospital from a field three-quarters of a mile away.

There still remains the isolation block to be seen. This has happily never been called into use. It has a quaint portico, and is carried out in rough-cast, red tiles, and green paint, like the rest of the building. The dining-room is green and white and oak, and the nurse's bedroom adjoining the ward has an ingenious little peephole, so that she may keep an ever-watchful eye upon her patients. Otherwise it is the main block in miniature, kitchen and all. And attached to it is the coach-house, with the magnificent ambulance, which conveys the sufferers from

their homes. There is a plot of ground set aside for a kitchen garden and a fine tennis lawn. And hidden away behind a bank, covered in summer-time with St. John's wort, is the little mortuary, which has only once been used since the hospital was opened. The names of the villages which are entitled to use the hospital are: Woburn, Husbome Crawley, Ridgmount, Eversholt, Milton Bryant, Potsgrove and Battlesden, Little Brickhill, Bow Brickhill, Hockliffe, Tebworth, Wavendon, Salford, Toddington, Tingrith, Steppingley, and Lidlington. From all these villages the local doctors can recommend patients to the hospital, and when the case has been admitted by the Duchess's sanction, the doctor continues to attend the patient at the hospital. Preference is, of course, given to those patients least able to obtain good nursing in their own homes. The matron and two staff nurses—fully qualified from the London Hospital—are always in residence. They wear pretty green linen gowns and white caps.

The model farm is a feature of most great estates; but it were well if the model hospital were imitated up and down the land by those who are able to build and support such institutions in so generous and thorough a way as characterises the Duchess of Bedford's hospital. In every detail the Woburn Cottage Hospital is a triumph of efficiency and completeness—an ideal resting-place for the "sickness-broken body."

BELLA S. WOOLF.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE CEREAL OUTLOOK.

IN comparing this year with last, farmers have great reason to congratulate themselves on the superior prospects of 1905. Last year at this time the low-lying country was all so water-logged that it was almost impossible to go on with the usual processes of agriculture. Everything was behindhand in 1904, but on most farms this year the work is all forward. In a very short time now the time for the spring sowings will have come, and should there be a dry season for this, the year is likely to bear very good fruit. Some complaints are heard from the early lambing flocks that the dampness of the last week has been prejudicial to the health of the lambs. While it seems likely that livestock generally will be as profitable in the coming as they were in the preceding season, the outlook for corn prices is one difficult to read. The figures for the time being seem to have come to a standstill, and nobody can quite tell whether the supplies from the colonies and abroad are or are not likely to increase in quantity during the next twelve months. We have, no doubt, a diminution in the export from the United States, but this very fact may tempt growers in other countries to raise an extra quantity of wheat.

LAST YEAR'S AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS.

One of the most surprising things is the continuous and steady growth of the quantity of food shipped into Great Britain. Looking down the table which has been compiled for last year

up to December 31st, we find an increase in almost every important kind of imported meat. We bought more cattle and more sheep for food than we had done in either of the two previous years, yet of fresh beef and mutton we had imported nearly the usual quantity. There was a slight rise in the import of bacon as compared with the previous year, but a fall as compared with two years before. With these important kinds of meat we keep on purchasing increased quantities of poultry and game. Of the foreign supply of eggs there is no cessation, their value for the last year having reached the gigantic figure of £6,730,573. For foreign butter we paid the still more enormous sum of over £21,000,000. For wheat we paid over £34,000,000, not counting over £7,000,000 spent on flour, though we are glad to find that this is a decreasing quantity, the figures being £7,258,606 in 1904, as compared with £9,723,652 in 1903, and £8,925,616 in 1902. We bought fewer potatoes than last year,

but the importation of tomatoes is rapidly increasing. Curiously enough, there is a falling off in the supply of flowers, seeds, clover, grass. It is a bill that leads one to do a great deal of speculation in regard to the condition of the people who year by year enlarge their consumption of foreign-grown food. It proves also how much dependent we are on other countries for the simplest necessities of life, and there are a great many other problems suggested for the consideration of which we lack time and space.

CANADIAN WHEAT.

The importation of Canadian wheat into the United States is giving rise to discussions that are likely to leave practical results. A salient fact is that for some time past, in the words of a Montreal correspondent of *The Times*, "the demand for food-stuffs in the United States is increasing much faster than production." It is only in this way, following the understood law of political economy, that population always tends to increase beyond the means of existence. But one of the first effects here must be that the United States will become an importer instead of an exporter of food-stuffs. Again, on account of the comparative failure of the

wheat crop of the United States, the milling industry is being seriously threatened. To meet this the drawback of 25 per cent. was only made when the actual wheat imported was exported again in the shape of flour. But now a very strong agitation has arisen to abolish the duty altogether. The correspondent states the case thus: "Of course, the United States farmer is opposing the miller in this matter, as he has been receiving 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. more per bushel for his wheat than the Canadian farmer, largely because of the duty." On the other hand, the millers threaten to remove their mills to Canada and thus ruin a home industry, so that the old controversy between Protection and Free Trade is being fought out on a small scale. A few years ago the closest student of economics would scarcely have deemed it possible that an issue of this kind should arise so soon out of the United States having to import food.



Bolas.

THE ENTRANCE.

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COCKLE-GATHERING AT STIFFKEY, NORFOLK.

ON the Norfolk coast, halfway between Holne Point, near where the Hunstanton Lighthouse looks out over the "Roaring Middle," and the new villas of Cromer, a pretty little chalk stream enters the North Sea, through the Vale of Stiffkey. If you drew a line from the outfall of the Stiffkey River to the North Pole, you would not touch land. Nothing but hundreds of leagues of weltering ocean lie between you and the everlasting ice. The sea, along this whole North Norfolk coast, is very shallow; indeed, there is no deep water at all until you begin to turn the corner at Weybourne, just north of Sheringham. There is an old rhyme which shows that the Norfolk people always expected that if England were ever invaded, it would be on Weybourne Beach, where the ships could almost lie alongside the land. This shallowness of the sea, which kept invaders out, has also a curious effect on the migration or stay of sea creatures of all kinds. In the summer the water is too hot for the Polar and Northern creatures. In the winter the frost gets at the enormous levels of mud and sand at low water, and makes them too cold for the Southern and sun-loving animals. The results are two-fold. Fewer kinds of sea animals are found there than, for instance, on the Essex coast, or the shores of Devon. But the creatures which do flourish there exist in enormous numbers, perhaps from the absence of competition. Among these are the mussels, which cluster in masses like small islands at some points just inside the Wash, and the cockles, which are found at various places along the coast from the Wash to Blakeney. But of all the cockles of England those of Stiffkey are the best, as they feed on a kind of blue mud, or rather a mixture, one quarter mud and three-quarters sand, probably due to ages of detritus brought down by the river. The cockle-shells themselves take the bluish colour of the bed in which they lie, and are known in the trade as "Stiffkey Blues." As many as a hundred women of the neighbourhood gain a living by working in this natural sand-bank fishery, where the cockles lie like potatoes, only waiting to be dug up. The cockle-women gather, where they have not sowed, for the cockles are kind enough to sow themselves, which shows what an enormous advantage the sea has over the land as an economic

the only literary reference is in the celebrated lament of Mr. Jorrock, when he remembered, after losing a fox twenty miles from home at 4 p.m., that haddock and cockle-sauce were awaiting him for dinner. In the Fisheries Exhibition reports, which contain some fourteen volumes of interesting practical information about every kind of food fish, the cockle is treated almost as respectfully as even the Stiffkey people could wish, the



A. H. Robinson.

MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES.

Copyright

more so as the high character of their particular cockles is duly recognised. No less than £25,000 a year is received for cockles gathered in Morecombe Bay in Lancashire. There is also a great cockle industry at Tenby in Wales. The Lancashire workpeople in the cotton towns eat cockles in preference to the other cheap shellfish. London, on the other hand, prefers whelks and periwinkles; but the taste for cockles must be a moderately strong one. The average number eaten is 67,000,000, which works out for the entire possible number of cockle-eating age in the London population at about fifteen cockles per head—a mere nothing, as anyone who has acquired a proper taste for them will admit. It is rather amusing to contrast modern and ancient authority on their wholesomeness. The latest official pronouncement is that "cockles are equally good raw and cooked, and may be eaten in almost any numbers with impunity, boiled or roasted or raw, or as sauce for fish." On the other hand, in 1650, one Venner, in a book called "The Via Recta ad Longam Vitam," which might be translated freely as "straight tips for longevity," is very severe both on mussels and cockles. He says that "amongst shellfish muscles (*sic*) are of grossest juice and worst nourishment, and most noisome to the stomach. They abundantly breed phlegm and gross humours, and dispose the body unto fevers. I advise all such as are respectful of their health to abandon them." What would this stupid and ignorant old quack have said could he have lived to see the enormous, profitable, and beneficial mussel industry carried on in France?

"Cockles," he goes on to remark, "are not so noisome as muscles; they are of lighter concoction, and better nourishment, yet not laudable meat for such as lead studious or easy kinds of life, or have weak stomachs." Something should be said about the cockle's stomach. "To a thinking mind," as Gilbert White says, there is, or should be, something rather wonderful in the fact that an ordinary sand-bank is stuffed, like a kind of sand-pie, with living creatures. In it, besides the various sea-worms, the casts of which are so remarkable a feature in the photographs here shown, there are razor-fish, shrimps, where it lies



A. H. Robinson.

AT WORK ON THE FLATS.

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producer of food. The cockle has been called "the poor man's oyster." It is indeed an excellent shellfish; yet it is curious to note how very little notice of its importance, its habits, or of the distribution and sale of the fish, appears in standard books, even those dealing with the fisheries. Even the "Harvest of the Sea" has almost nothing to say of the cockle; neither have the large popular natural histories, or the encyclopædias; and almost

life, or have weak stomachs." Something should be said about the cockle's stomach. "To a thinking mind," as Gilbert White says, there is, or should be, something rather wonderful in the fact that an ordinary sand-bank is stuffed, like a kind of sand-pie, with living creatures. In it, besides the various sea-worms, the casts of which are so remarkable a feature in the photographs here shown, there are razor-fish, shrimps, where it lies

awash, sand-eels, which bury themselves in the sand, as if in a damp cake, when the tide goes down, various "sea-squirts," and our friends the cockles. The question is, what do they live on? Do they find food among the sand, or do they merely burrow in it as rabbits do in the sand-hills, and get their food elsewhere. The sand-shrimps, which only live in sandy water, do this. So do the sand-eels, which, as soon as their temporary burial is over and the sea comes up, sport themselves in the water and feed. The razor-fish also come up to the surface and feed on atoms floating in the water. But the sand-worms and the cockles actually eat the sand, the former in the same way as the earth-worm eats earth. The cockle, however, proceeds in a slightly different way. He eats straight ahead, devouring the sand and what is in the sand. Clearly there can be nothing in the latter to make up the body of a fat cockle. But amongst it lie minute microscopic algæ, or sea growths, and the more there are of these the better your cockle. It is the same



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RETIRING BEFORE THE RISING TIDE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

is so rich that the oysters eat till they burst. The Stiffkey blue sand is particularly rich in the algæ which make cockle

food. The proportion of shell to fish in a cockle is not nearly so large as in the oyster. Consequently cockles must be considered very cheap at their all-round price of £5 per ton. In Caermarthen Bay the cockles sell for about £15,000 a year. One of the best points about the cockle industry is that it goes on all the year round. Lately there have been some complaints about the immense destruction of cockles by sea-gulls. The Stiffkey people say that the damage done, owing to the increase of the birds since the Wildfowl Protection Act, is very serious, and that they get ten cockles to every one picked up by the women. On a limited area like a cockle-bed, this is very likely to be true. "Bird-scaring" on a sand-bank does not seem to have been tried. It is certain that the birds are too wary to be shot in any numbers.



A. H. Robinson.

WITH THEIR LOADS.

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with oysters, only they eat mud for the minute organisms it contains. There is a creek on a Suffolk river where the mud

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HEAVILY LADEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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"Cockling" is hard work, and often very cold. Personally, I have never felt the force or the coldness of the wind so keenly as on these immense Stiffkey flats. We were forcing flocks of shore-fowl, knots, dunlins, plover, and

curlew before us against the gale, in the hope that they would become tired and at last fly back over our heads. The wind feels like a hand pushing against you, and over the surface there flies a continuous fine cloud of sand, getting into your mouth, nose, eyes, and hair. The odd costume of the cockle-women is partly designed to keep off this penetrating sand, and also to screen the glare of the sun, which is trying in summer-time, when the photographs were taken. On the head is a wide straw hat; but over this again, and covering the ears and nape of the neck, is a broad handkerchief to keep the hat on, and the sand out. Knickerbockers of sackings are worn, over which a skirt falls when they are on shore. When they are on the sand, the skirt is lifted and tied round the waist. Others "convert" the skirt into what is known elsewhere as a divided



A. H. Robinson. A STIFFKEY COCKLE-WOMAN. Copyright

skirt, with a kind of primitive rope harness. In summer they wear footless stockings, and work with bare feet, while in winter thick boots and thick woollen hose are worn.

The way to the cockle strands, which is the local name, lies just over the meal-marshes, a deposit brought all the way from the fen rivers, and laid for twenty miles along this coast. It is covered with crab-grass and sea-lavender, and looks like a lovely sea-moor, both when the purple sea-lavender is in blossom, and later when the brown leaves look like dead heather. Between these marshes run creeks with little bridges over them for the sheep. Beyond lie the inner sands and the cockle strands, immense regions of air and emptiness, without foreground and almost without horizon; and last, along the edge of the furthest ebb, an enormous sole-backed sand-bank called the High Sand, studded with ancient wrecks, and the dread of every sailor on the coast when a northern gale is blowing. No ship can possibly cross it, or live on it, and no lifeboat can get over it so vast are the billows, and so deep is the area of surf.

INDIAN GAME BIRDS AND WILDFOWL.

THE appearance of a fourth edition of Colonel Le Messurier's well-known work on the game, shore, and water birds of India is a sufficient proof of the general interest felt by Anglo-Indians in the wonderfully rich and varied feathered life of their adopted country. Whether the present edition is improved by the addition of a great deal of matter, in the shape of very imperfect descriptions of non-Indian species, is a matter of doubt, and the author might have been better employed in correcting the rather unusually numerous errors which disfigure the work and in improving the illustrations, some of which are quite unrecognisable. But, with all its faults, the book is a useful work of reference if supplemented by others, and is unique and invaluable in concentrating

under one cover notices of so many important and interesting species and families of birds. In respect of her list of game, shore, and water birds our Indian Empire can indeed challenge the rivalry of the world. The two species of peafowl alone—to take the game birds first—would put any country's list of these in the front rank. We are apt, because the peacock is so well known in domestication, to forget what a wonderful bird he is—to fail to realise that he represents Nature's final effort in the direction of animal decoration, one eyed plume from his train being a perfect design and colour-scheme in itself. And, as if the ordinary peacock were not enough, we are presented, eastward of India proper, with another variation of the type in the form of the Burmese peacock, with its neck of scaly green-bronze and long slender crest; the ultimate development of the peafowl idea, inasmuch as the hen, except that she bears no train, is as beautiful as the cock, and so has progressed further along the path to perfection than the sombre mate of the more familiar bird. Along with the peafowls we find the jungle-fowls, the red species, the ancestor of that old companion of man, gallant chanticleer, plumaged gules and sable, and most savagely spurred, as befits the gallant knight he is; and the grey bird of the South of India, with his gold-bedropped hackle so beloved of salmon-fly makers, to say nothing of the orange-red and purple wild cock of Ceylon. Above the plains and foot-hills which form the territory of these range the Kaleege pheasants, near relatives of the exquisite silver pheasant of our aviaries, and, alas! just as useless for sport. Above them some birds have their being which recall in make and habits our pheasants at home; the triple-crested koklass, swift in flight and excellent in flavour, and the dull-plumaged but long-tailed cheer, a denizen of bushy ledged precipices, down which he parachutes madly when disturbed by the sportsman.

Other noble game of the deciduous jungles of the hills are the strange tragopans, the commonest one horned and gorgeted azure, with the guinea-fowl's pearl markings of plumage on a ground of richest crimson; and the grandest of all, the Monaul or Impeyan pheasant, with plumage of a humming-bird's radiance on a body as big as a fowl's, and a cry which is a strangely mellow rendering of the peewit's. Above them in the conifer zone lives the blood-pheasant, flavouring himself horribly on an aromatic diet of pine and juniper, and, where the forest disappears and leaves a stretch of grass running upwards to the eternal snows, the great Ramchukor or snow-rock, a partridge as big as a small goose, grazes on the turf or scratches for bulbs, with one wary eye on the soaring eagle, whose frequent attempts to capture him sitting give interest to a life at these stupendous heights. And he is not the highest dweller, for where the scant moss and lichens half hide the rocks of the snow-line a beautifully-pencilled bird, the ptarmigan-like snow-partridge, picks up a scanty living and waxes fat and savoury in an arctic environment.

There are no true grouse on these Himalayan heights, these grouse-like pheasants and partridges taking their place, just as trout-like carp take the place of real trout in the mountain streams; but on the plains the curious sand-grouse live and in some cases breed, hatching their eggs on the arid soil under a sun so fierce that the said eggs literally begin to cook if the bird is scared off them for any time. Of quails and partridges there is no need to speak; India has its full share of them, and the natives are still as fond of making pets and gladiators of quails as were the Greeks of old.

Bustards there are, too—the great Indian bustard, exceeding 2yds. in expanse and 2st. in weight; the desert-haunting houbara, a favourite quarry with falconers, and the delicious floricans, the smaller kind, or likh, adorned with long ear-plumes, such as are only found elsewhere among certain birds of paradise. With such a large and varied list India ought to be the best country in the world for small-game shooting; that it is not is to be attributed to the fact that there is no properly organised and sufficient preservation, and that the country fairly swarms with ground vermin, from the leopard and jackal to the mongoose and cobra, so that it is a wonder how any game-bird survives at all.

Happily, however, the subject of game preservation is now being taken in hand more seriously, and one most destructive class of human poachers, the plume-hunters, who used to destroy Monauls and tragopans by the thousand for the sake of their skins, have been effectually dealt with by Lord Curzon's admirable enactment prohibiting the export of such goods from the country. Legislative interference, however, is still much needed to protect the water-fowl, which, from the biggest ducks to the smallest sand-pipers, are yearly captured by hundreds by various poaching methods, and sent alive to the markets, to die slowly of hunger and thirst, for the native never troubles to attend to their wants so long as he can keep them alive without attention for a few days.

So, in the Calcutta Provision Bazaar, one may see bunches of living snipe tied together by the legs, and handled like so many strings of onions; and ducks with their legs dislocated, all of them, if too scared to eat, so desperate with thirst that they will

drink greedily while held in the hand, despite their fear. All through the winter this cruelty goes on, and has gone on for years, though my friend Mr. W. S. Burke, the editor of the leading Indian sporting paper, has constantly protested against it. The sight of it always mars the pleasure of a visit to this bazaar, otherwise a most interesting place, by reason of the number of different species of the stilted and web-footed tribes which throng in millions to India in winter, when, as Seeborn picturesquely puts it, the Ice-angel has closed the gates of their paradise on the Siberian tundras. At this time India is perhaps the only country where birds, valued elsewhere for food and sport, may amount to a pest; the Indian ryot knows as well as the Roman farmer in Virgil's day "what harm is wrought by greedy goose and Strymon's cranes," and the garganey teal, comparatively scarce and scattered in the West, comes in dense multitudes, which break down acres of rice in a night.

Also come better-known quarry of the English wildfowler, mallard and widgeon, pintail and pochard, to meet on the wheels the resident Indian water-fowl, the noisy, quarrelsome, whistling tree-ducks, the lovely little cotton-teal, smaller than a pigeon, and clad gorgeously in snow white and bronze green, and the strange pink-headed duck, with a body of glossy sepia, set off by a gaunt head of glowing pink, with ruby eyes. Then there is the interest of the invasion of India by various estrays; the wild swan of the mute swan, the beautiful falcated teal of China, and of late years even the king of the ducks, the mandarin duck of the same country, till recently only known as a captive bird, imported to stock the aviaries of wealthy natives.

As to the waders, their name is legion; the common snipe is in myriads, and his relative, the pintailed species, equally common; the jack is found, and more rarely the woodcock, with others of which home sportsmen never make the acquaintance. Most notable of these is the so-called painted snipe, really a gaudy sand-piper, with butterfly wings eyed with buff on a ground of pencilled grey. This is a resident with most peculiar habits. The hen is the more beautiful bird, and in all probability, as is usual in such cases, leaves the sitting to the male; both sexes also have the idea that they can terrify an enemy by the display of their spotted wings, accompanied by cat-like hissing. Some feathers of this bird, beautifully reproduced, form one of the most interesting illustrations in the present book. Another common wader is the strange and lovely pheasant-tailed jaganá or water-pheasant, to my mind the most beautiful of all small water-fowl. From the pheasant tribe it borrows a long tapering tail and a patch of pure gold on its neck, the rest of its plumage being black and white; in carriage it has all the grace of the crane in a body no bigger than a turtle-dove's, and the enormously long green toes which support it on the tank-weeds are not noticeable in its natural surroundings. This is a resident bird, but in winter it entirely alters its appearance, losing its long tail and most of the black and gold in its plumage, and thus incidentally disproving a recent theory to the effect that only animals in a country with a hard winter change their colour according to the seasons. Godwits and curlews, sand-pipers and stints, are in numbers beyond telling, with quantities of waders of the non-sporting types, herons, bitterns, and storks, from the gigantic bald-headed adjutant, formerly a street scavenger in Calcutta, to the "paddy-bird," a quaint dwarf heron found wherever there is a splash of water, and changing mysteriously from an inconspicuous brown object in repose to a snowy white creature when it takes wing, which it only does when it catches your eye.

Beside all this host of land game-birds and fresh-water fowl the sea-birds of India make a singularly poor show. There are no auks or divers, and very few petrels, while even the cormorants, which are numerous enough, prefer the fresh water, where they meet the darter or snake-bird, so well known to visitors to the Zoo. Tropic birds and brown and white gannets haunt the seas, but do not breed on Indian coasts, and even gulls, as a rule, are scarce. It is true that a good many kinds haunt the north-western coasts, but along the shores of the Bay of Bengal the brown-headed gull, a near ally of our familiar friend in London at the present time, is the only really abundant species.

Terns, however, are common enough, and many kinds are found, from the great Caspian tern to tiny dwarfs hardly bigger than swifts, the most fairy-like of all aquatic birds. Terns are also common all over the inland waters, and are likely to be the first Indian birds the visitor sees, as they follow the ship through the Sunderbund channels, plunging in the sacred but muddy stream of the Ganges, where it is stirred up by the screw.

All of these birds will be found set out with their kith and

kin in Colonel Le Messurier's book, and if my opening criticisms have seemed harsh, I hasten to say that there is nothing in it which observant students cannot set right with a few marginal notes, and I sincerely wish it many more editions in which to carry on the work of acquainting Englishmen in India with the wealth of birds with which the woods and waters teem in "the land of regrets."

FRANK FINN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

POULTRY-FARMING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have no knowledge as to whether poultry-farming on a large scale is profitable or not, but I am quite convinced that the farm labourer can make a little extra money by keeping a few fowls. Even from the humblest table there are crumbs that very often are wasted, which might be utilised with advantage in feeding, say, from ten to twenty fowls. The birds will always pick up a certain amount of food on their own account, and beyond their market value perform a great service to the agriculturist, by destroying obnoxious insects and the seeds of innumerable weeds, which would infallibly do his next year's crop a great deal of damage. For a few weeks when the grain has been sown, and again when it is ripening for harvest, the hungry fowls of the labourer may do a considerable amount of harm to the farmer; but this is a matter that is easily arranged. Netting, either of wire or of string, is extremely cheap, and there can be no possible objection to confining the fowls for a short time. This, it seems to me, would go far to solve that vexed question of "rural exodus," for which nobody seems to have discovered a complete remedy. If the French peasant can afford to sell his eggs and poultry in England after paying for their transport, surely the holder of a small allotment within a short distance of a market town might find it worth his while to keep a few fowls.—LANDLORD.

PRECIOUS STONES IN SIDMOUTH BAY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A writer in a contemporary mentions the number of fine sardis, jaspers, and agates found among the shingle of the beautiful little bay of Sidmouth in South Devon. The industry of cutting and polishing these stones has much declined, probably because, though extremely rich and pretty in colour and markings, they are not decorative when worn and set as ornaments. A moss agate is a lovely object; but though when made up with other pebbles into a box, or cut into a vase, it has real artistic value, it does not add to costume. The main and original home of many of these Sidmouth chalcedonies and pebbles is at the far side of the great range of the Blackdown Hills, though they are scattered over the whole range. Near Whetstone, near Chard, was a large bed of chalcedony, while various forms of ornamental pebble are so common as to be picked up in the fields after rain has washed the surface.—C.

A HAMPSHIRE WOODMAN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Aged peasants too often bear on their faces the fell imprint that endless labour and care write on the cheeks of mortals; but I send you the enclosed as an example of one toil-worn worker whose face is, indeed, frosty, but kindly. He is a follower of the craft that is most natural to woody Hampshire, and has carried his tools to the copse every morning for



as long a time as suffices for two generations to pass away. Yet cheerfully and tranquilly he goes on performing his daily task, and will probably continue to do so till the kindly earth, which loves the old as much as the young, opens her arms to take him to rest.—F. A.

THE NORTHUMBRIAN WOLF.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The portrait, taken post-mortem, of the Annandale wolf lies before me, a fact which should dispose of the curious doubts circulated as to the mischief among the Northumbrian flocks having been caused by a dog. It is a large Northern wolf, not an Indian wolf, of the traditional Red Riding Hood type. The coat is shaggy, the tail thick, and the jaws are long and stout. It has apparently lost one fore leg, which, as it was killed by a train on the railway line, was probably caused by the rail-guard of the engine. One of the most curious facts in its career is that it had crossed the Pennines into Cumberland, for it was killed on the Midland Railway close to Cumwhitton Station, just south of Carlisle, and the alighting-place for one of the best lengths of salmon-water on the Eden. Oddly enough, it is still said that a wolf is at large in Northumberland. Can there be two escaped wolves?—F.

THE LAST WOLF.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your correspondent, "R. S. W.," is mistaken in thinking the last wolf was killed by Sir E. Cameron. This is a statement which has been often made, and as often shown to be wrong. A wolf was killed in Glen Loth in Caithness many years later, but the last reputed one of all to be killed was in 1743, in the region of the Findhorn in Morayshire, by one McQueen, an inhabitant of those parts. This was sixty-three years later than the one recorded as having been despatched by Sir E. Cameron, which was in 1680.



A BURRO CARRYING WATER-BOTTLES.

The last wolf killed in England was captured at Rospeith, a farm at Ludgvan, near Penzance.—G. W.

BIRD-BOXES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The practice of putting up boxes for birds to build in has, in the case of our garden, not been a conspicuous success. Has the position of the boxes in respect to aspect anything to do with this, most of them facing the east? I ask because I saw in one newspaper the other day that the boxes ought to have their openings to the southward and westward, and a few days later I saw in another paper that the boxes should have a northern aspect. Will some of your readers kindly enlighten me as to the correct position?—J. O. HOPKINS (ADMIRAL), Romsey, Hants.

THE BURRO.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The best friend of the Mexican peasant is the hardy little burro, which is peculiar to North and South America. In the United States it is found only in Colorado and other Western States. It is small and very



BURROS LOADED WITH GRASS.

strong. It is said that the little burro, not half so tall as man, can carry a heavier load than any horse. In the mountains he is as sure-footed as a goat, and he seems never to tire. He has all the combativeness of the donkey tribe, to which he belongs; but, except when this combativeness is aroused, he is as gentle and affectionate as a pony. He finds his own food in summer, and subsists on a very small allowance in the winter. In a country like Mexico, where half of the burden-carrying is done by men, a sure and hardy little beast like the burro is a great blessing. The burros are a common sight

on the streets of the city of Mexico, where they are used to carry the great earthen water-bottles in which fresh water is delivered at residences. In the country they are used for bringing in the crops, and the burro will carry a load of grass almost three times as high as himself. Burros have been used for transporting building blocks and railroad iron.—X.

THE BREAKING OF DOGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Last week, when I was in London, my attention was drawn to an article which appeared in your issue of December 17th, entitled "The Breaking of Dogs." I regret I did not see it sooner for the concluding paragraph—in which the author deals with hard-mouthed and "gun-shy" dogs—should not remain unchallenged for one single day. "Many and various are the remedies suggested by various dog-breakers as a cure for a hard-mouthed puppy," Captain Radclyffe, the author, says the best course to adopt is, in his opinion, to give the puppy in question "something to pick up which hurts when it is pinched, such a thing as a rabbit-skin stuffed and plentifully besprinkled with pins, or other sharp-pointed instruments inserted through the skin." A more fatal course it would be impossible to define, and the trouble I have had with dogs educated on such lines it would be difficult to exaggerate. When a man carries anything that is worth carrying, he carries it securely, so that it may not slip from his grasp. If a dog is afraid to close his mouth on a bird, and bring it back to you at a gallop without shifting his hold, to call him a retriever is to call him what he is not. "Is there no limit to this firm grasp?" possibly someone may ask. Certainly there is. The judge at a field trial, when he makes his awards,

will very soon show a handler whether or not a secure grasp and one that leaves its mark are in the same category. The "gun-shy" dog, according to Captain Radclyffe, is, "to put it mildly, the devil," and the best cure he knows is "a charge of shot in the head at about five paces distance." COUNTRY LIFE is widely read, and it is deplorable to think what harm may be done should such advice be followed, and how many valuable and affectionate dogs may be ruthlessly destroyed. If Captain Radclyffe means a timid dog, which has gone from bad to worse, and has been for a considerable time in the hands of men totally ignorant of how such a dog should be treated, he and I are thoroughly in accord; if, on the other hand, he means that a dog, say, from nine to twelve or fourteen months old, which has bolted incontinently half-a-dozen times over, should be destroyed, our views are as wide asunder as the Poles. The word "gun-shy," applied to a dog, is a misnomer altogether. There never was such a dog, and never will be. The animal which fears the discharge of a gun (I have seen a retriever terrified even when a gun was being taken out of its case and put together) is simply a timid dog, and before making the remarks which I hope, by your courtesy, may appear in the columns of COUNTRY LIFE, I would quote the words of the late Mr. Shirley of Ettington on the subject. Mr. Shirley, some few years before his death, wrote as follows: "Dogs differ, like men, enormously in temperament. Even with

youngsters of the same litter there are the bold and the timid; but I cordially agree with Sir Henry Smith that the gun-shy dog is made so by improper breaking, for it is not a hereditary fault, and can be entirely prevented by a little common-sense and good management." Captain Radclyffe does not, I admit, say that it is impossible to cure a gun-shy dog; but from the advice he gives I am justified in assuming that such is his opinion, so that the labour involved in effecting a cure would be too much for any sportsman to undertake. From either point of view, he is equally in error. A dog of such an age as I have indicated cannot only be cured, but made keen and fond of the gun in half-a-dozen lessons of not more than 20 min. duration. With the last subject I took in hand I made a very serious blunder—the very blunder I blame others for making. I did not breed the dog myself, and, though not of a confiding disposition, I took the word of the man from whom I got him, who described him as a first-class retriever. Instead of making sure, and firing the gun at a long distance, and gradually and carefully bringing it and the pupil closer together, I shot a bird when the dog was at my side, and with the most disastrous results. It was on the open moor, and I feared I should lose the animal

altogether. By judicious manœuvring, however, his progress was arrested, and he was captured and led back to his kennel, looking ashamed of himself and thoroughly intimidated. Such a dog, à la Captain Radclyffe, should have had a charge of shot in the head at about five paces distance. He did not get that; he got common-sense treatment, which cured him in a week's time, and enabled me to sell him for 30 guineas. A better retriever I never shot over, and a cheaper dog purchaser never got.—HENRY SMITH, Chisholme, Hawick, N.B.